THE

OBSERVER:

BEING A COLLECTION OF

MORAL, LITERARY AND FAMILIAR

ESSAYS.

——MULTORUM PROVIDUS URBES
ET MORES HOMINUM INSPEXIT—— (HORAT.)

By *RICHARD CUMBERLAND*, Esq.

THE FIFTH EDITION, NEWLY ARRANGED.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN ENTIRE TRANSLATION OF THE COMEDY OF THE CLOUDS.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
Printed for C. DILLY, in the Poultry.

1798.

CONTENTS

OF THE

THIRD VOLUME.

NUMBER

LIX. THE notion of a certain humouriſt that death might be avoided at will. Remarks conſequent thereto, and ſerious reflections upon that neceſſary event recommended to mankind in general - - - - 1

LX. Serious meditations on the character of an infidel. Quotation from Bonnet's philoſophical and critical enquiries concerning chriſtianity. Tranſlation of 139th Pſalm - - - 9

LXI. Of the morality of chriſtianity as compared with that of natural religion. Of the benefits of revelation independent of it's moral doctrines 19

LXII. An argument for the evidences of the chriſtian religion. A variety of paſſages from the antient heathen writers adduced to ſhew how far natural religion had enlightened mankind before revelation took place - - - 27

CONTENTS.

NUMBER

LXIII. Obſervations upon theſe ſeveral inſtances of right reaſon in the heathen world. Modes of reaſoning, by which natural religion might deduce the probability of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments. Confuſion of ſyſtems in the philoſophy of the heathens. Of the peculiar nation of the Jews; their character, hiſtory, government, and religion - - - - - 36

LXIV. Reaſons offered *a priori* for the neceſſity of a mediator. The appearance of Chriſt on earth accompanied with ſuch evidences as put it out of doubt that he was the true Meſſias. Arguments of David Levi, in a pamphlet lately publiſhed, for the non-accordance of the evangelical genealogies examined. The goſpel account of the birth of Chriſt vindicated - - - - - 46

LXV. Argument of David Levi for the ſuperiority of the miracles wrought by Moſes over thoſe, which the evangeliſts record of Chriſt. His cavils againſt two particular miracles of Chriſt examined and oppoſed - - - 56

LXVI. Further defence of the miracles objected to by David Levi; his charge of contradiction againſt the evangelical hiſtorians anſwered, and his further attempts for ſinking the character of Chriſt below that of Moſes fairly conſidered. The whole argument recapitulated, ſummed up and concluded - - - - 68

LXVII. The origin and progreſs of poetry 79

LXVIII. On

CONTENTS.

NUMBER

LXVIII. On natural and acquired taſte. Virgil's Æneid conſidered. A paſſage compared with one in Claudian. Ben Jonſon's opinion of Shakeſpear. The ſituation of a more modern poet deſcribed - - - - - - - 90

LXIX. A delineation of Shakeſpear's characters of Macbeth and Richard. A parallel between him and Æſchylus - - - - 101

LXX. The ſubject continued - - 111

LXXI. Further continuation - - 123

LXXII. Concluſion of the ſubject - 133

LXXIII. Remarks upon the characters of Falſtaff and his group - - - - 144

LXXIV. Ben Jonſon's imitations of Philoſtratus compared with the original paſſages. His ſatirical glances at Shakeſpear inſtanced. His hags in the maſque of the Queens compared with Shakeſpear's Witches in Macbeth - 156

LXXV. Review of Ben Jonſon's comedy of the Fox - - - - 166

LXXVI. Review of the Samſon Agoniſtes. The criticiſms of Dr. Samuel Johnſon upon that drama examined and oppoſed - - - 176

LXXVII. Comparative review of Rowe's Fair Penitent with the Fatal Dowry of Maſſinger 188

LXXVIII. The ſame continued - - 198

LXXIX. Concluſion of the review - - 210

LXXX. Remarks upon Congreve's comedy of the Double Dealer - - - 231

LXXXI. Ob-

CONTENTS.

NUMBER

LXXXI. Obſervations on the various ſorts of ſtile. Examples adduced, and ſome hints ſuggeſted to young ſtudents - - - - 246

LXXXII. Converſation in a coffee-houſe upon the time paſt compared with the time preſent. The merits of the authors in each period candidly conſidered - - - - 257

LXXXIII. The coffee-houſe debate on the aforeſaid ſubject concluded - - - 267

LXXXIV. General obſervations on the ſocial character. Certain rules recommended for the improvement of our manners and habits in ſociety. Example of an egotiſt, and the rebuke which he received - - - - 279

LXXXV. Advice to a man of landed property. Habits of life and expence in England particularized. A ſhort view of the learned profeſſions. An irregular poem addreſſed to popularity 289

LXXXVI. Author explains the motives of his work and concludes the third volume - 299

46
4 3
627

THE

OBSERVER.

No. LIX.

Omnes eodem cogimur; omnium
Verſatur urna ſerius ocius
Sors exitura.——— HORAT. CARM.

All to the ſame laſt home are bound;
Time's never-weary wheel runs round;
And life at longeſt or at ſhorteſt date
Snaps like a thread betwixt the ſhears of Fate.

I REMEMBER to have been told of a certain humouriſt, who ſet up a very ſingular doctrine upon the ſubject of death, aſſerting that he had diſcovered it to be not a neceſſary and inevitable event, but an act of choice and volition; he maintained that he had certain powers and reſources within

himſelf ſufficient to ſupport him in his reſolution of holding out againſt the ſummons of death, till he became weary of life; and he pledged himſelf to his friends, that he would in his own perſon give experimental proof of his hypotheſis.

What particular addreſs death made uſe of, when this ingenious gentleman was prevailed upon to ſtep out of the world, I cannot take upon myſelf to ſay; but certain it is, that in ſome weak moment he was overperſuaded to lay his head calmly on the pillow and ſurrender up his breath.

Though an event, ſo contrary to the promiſe he had given, muſt have been a ſtaggering circumſtance to many, who were intereſted in the ſucceſs of his experiment, yet I ſee good reaſon to ſuſpect that his hypotheſis is not totally diſcredited, and that he has yet ſome ſurviving diſciples, who are acting ſuch a part in this world as nobody would act but upon a ſtrong preſumption, that they ſhall not be compelled to go out of it and enter upon another.

Mortality, it muſt be owned, hath means of providing for the event of death, though none have yet been diſcovered of preventing it:

it: Religion and virtue are the great phyſicians of the ſoul; patience and reſignation are the nurſing-mothers of the human heart in ſickneſs and in ſorrow; conſcience can ſmooth the pillow under an aching head, and Chriſtian hope adminiſters a cordial even in our laſt moments, that lulls the agonies of death: But where is the need of theſe had this diſcovery been eſtabliſhed? why call in phyſicians and reſort to cordials, if we can hold danger at a diſtance without their help? I am to preſume therefore, that every human being, who makes his own will his maſter, and goes all lengths in gratifying his guilty paſſions without reſtraint, muſt rely upon his own will for keeping him out of all danger of future trouble, or he would never commit himſelf ſo confidentially and entirely to a maſter, which can give him no ſecurity in return for his blind obedience and devotion: All perſons of this deſcription I accordingly ſet down in the lump as converts to the doctrine of the learned gentleman, who advanced the intereſting diſcovery above-mentioned, but who unluckily miſſed ſome ſtep in the proof, that was to have eſtabliſhed it.

To what lengths of credulity they may really go is hard to ſay, but ſome ſuch hopes as theſe muſt buoy them up, becauſe I cannot think that any man would be wilfully wicked, fraudulent, perfidious, avaricious, cruel, or whatever elſe is deteſtable in the eye of God, if he ſaw death, his meſſenger, at the door; and I am even unwilling to believe, that he would be wantonly guilty, was he only convinced, that when death ſhall come to the door, he muſt be obliged to admit him; for if this be ſo, and if admiſſion may not be denied, then hath death a kind of viſitatorial power over us, which makes him not a gueſt to be invited at our pleaſure, but a lord and maſter of the houſe, to enter it as his own, and (which is worſt of all) without giving notice to us to provide for his entertainment. What man is ſuch a fool in common life, as to take up his abode in a tenement, of which he is ſure to be diſpoſſeſſed, and yet neglect to prepare himſelf againſt a ſurpriſe, which he is ſubject to every moment of the day and night? We are not apt to overlook our own intereſts and ſafety in worldly concerns, and therefore when the ſoul is given

up

up to ſin, I muſt ſuſpect ſome error in the brain.

What ſhall I ſay to perſuade the inconſiderate that they exiſt upon the precarious ſufferance of every moment, that paſſes over them in ſucceſſion? how ſhall I warn a giddy fool not to play his antick tricks and caper on the very utmoſt edge of a precipice? Who will guide the reeling drunkard in his path, and teach him to avoid the grave-ſtones of his fellow-ſots, ſet up by death as marks and ſignals to appriſe him of his danger? If the voice of nature, depoſing to the evidence of life's deceitful tenure from the beginning of things to the moment preſent, will neither gain audience nor belief, what can the moraliſt expect?

Which of all thoſe headlong voluptuaries, who ſeem in ſuch haſte to get to the end of life, is poſſeſſed of the art of prolonging it at pleaſure? to whom has the ſecret been imparted? Either they are deceived by a vain hope of evading death, or there is ſomething in a life of diſſipation not worth preſerving. I am aſtoniſhed at the ſtupidity of any man, who can deny himſelf the gratification of conſcious integrity: The proud man muſt

be a conſummate blockhead to take ſuch wearifome pains for a little extorted flattery of the moſt ſervile ſort, and overlook the ready means of gaining general reſpect upon the nobleſt terms: Is it not an abuſe of language and an inſult to common ſenſe for a ſilly fellow to announce himſelf to the world as a man of pleaſure, when there is not an action in his life, but leaves a ſting behind it to belye the character he profeſſes? Can one fellow-creature find amuſement in tormenting another? Is it poſſible there can be a recreation in malice, when it ſlanders the innocent; in fraud, when it cheats the unſuſpecting; in perfidy, when it betrays a benefactor? If any being, who does me wrong, will juſtify himſelf againſt the wrong by confeſſing, that he takes delight in injury, I will own to one inſtance of human depravity, which till that ſhall happen I will perſiſt to hope is not in exiſtence: The fact is that all men have that reſpect for juſtice, that they attempt to ſhelter their very worſt actions under it's defence; and even thoſe contemptible pilferers of reputation, who would be as much unknown by their names as they are by the concealment of them,

qualify

qualify (I am perſuaded) the dirty deed they are about by ſome convenient phantom of offence in the character they aſſault; even their hands cannot be raiſed to ſtrike without prefacing the blow by ſaying to themſelves—*This man deſerves to die.*—Fooliſh wretches, what computation muſt they make of life, who devote ſo great a portion of it to miſeries and reproaches of their own creating!

Let a rational creature for once talk common ſenſe to himſelf, and if no better words than the following occur to his thoughts, let him make uſe of them; he is heartily welcome to the loan.

"I know there is a period in approach, "when I muſt encounter an enemy to my "life, whoſe power is irreſiſtible: This is a "very ſerious thing for me to reflect upon, "and knowing it to be a truth infallible, I "am out of hope, that I can ſo far forget "the terms of my exiſtence, as totally to-ex-"pel it from my thoughts: If I could fore-"ſee the preciſe hour, when this enemy will "come, I would provide againſt it as well "as I am able, and fortify my mind to re-"ceive him with ſuch complacency as I

" could muſter: But of this hour I have
" alas! no foreſight; it may be this mo-
" ment, or the next, or years may intervene
" before it comes to paſs: It behoves me
" then to be upon my guard: He may ap-
" proach in terrors, that agoniſe me to think
" of; he may ſeize my ſoul in the commiſ-
" ſion of ſome dreadful act, and tranſport it
" to a place whoſe horrors have no termi-
" nation: I will not then commit that dread-
" ful act, becauſe I will not expoſe myſelf to
" that dreadful puniſhment: It is in my own
" choice to refrain from it, and I am not ſuch
" a deſperate fool to make choice of miſe-
" ry: If I act with this precaution, will he
" ſtill appear in this ſhape of terror? Cer-
" tainly he will not, nor can he in juſtice
" tranſport me to a place of puniſhment,
" when I have committed nothing to deſerve
" it: Whither then will he convey me? To
" the manſions of everlaſting happineſs:
" Where are my fears? What is now be-
" come of his terrors? He is my paſſport,
" my conductor, my friend: I will welcome
" him with embraces; I will ſmile upon him
" with gratitude, and accompany him with
" exultation."

No. LX.

I WOULD wiſh no man to deceive himſelf with opinions, which he has not thoroughly reflected upon in his ſolitary hours: Till he has *communed with his own heart in his chamber*, it will be dangerous to commit himſelf to its impulſes amidſt the diſtractions of ſociety: In ſolitude he will hear another voice than he has been uſed to hear in the colloquial ſcenes of life; for conſcience, though mute as the antient chorus in the buſtle of the drama, will be found a powerful ſpeaker in ſoliloquy. If I could believe that any man in theſe times had ſeriouſly and deliberately reaſoned himſelf into an abſolute contempt of things ſacred, I ſhould expect that ſuch a being ſhould uniformly act up to his principles in all ſituations, and, having thrown aſide all the reſtraints of religion, ſhould diſcharge from his mind all thoſe fears, apprehenſions, and ſolicitudes, that have any connection with the dread of futurity. But, without knowing what paſſes in the private thoughts of men, who profeſs theſe daring notions, I cannot help

obſerving, that, if noiſy clamour be a mark of cowardice, they alſo have the ſymptoms ſtrongly upon them of belying their own conſcience: They are bold in the crowd, and loudeſt in the revels of the feaſt; there they can echo the inſult, daſh the ridicule in the very face of Heaven, and ſtun their conſciences in the roar of the carouſal.

Let me picture to myſelf a man of this deſcription ſurprized into unexpected ſolitude after the revels of an evening, where he has been the wit of the company, at the expence of decency and religion; here his triumphs are over; the plaudits of his comrades no longer encourage him; the lights of the feaſt are extinguiſhed, and he is ſurrendered to darkneſs and reflection: Place him in the midſt of a deſart heath, a loneſome traveller in ſome dark tempeſtuous night, and let the elements ſubſcribe their terrors to encounter this redoubted champion—

Who durſt defy th' Omnipotent.

If conſiſtency be the teſt of a man's ſincerity, he ought now to hold the ſame language of defiance, and with undaunted ſpirit

cry out to the elements—" Do your worſt, " ye blind tools of chance! Since there can " be neither intelligence nor direction in " your rage, I ſet you at nought. You may " indeed ſubject me to ſome bodily incon- " venience, but you can raiſe no terrors in " my mind, for I have ſaid you have no " maſter: There is no hand to point the " lightning, and the ſtroke of its flaſh is di- " rected to no aim: If it ſmites the oak, it " periſhes; if it penetrates my breaſt, it an- " nihilates my exiſtence, and there is no " ſoul within me to reſume it. What have " I to fear? The worſt you threaten is a mo- " mentary extinction without pain or ſtrug- " gle; and as I only wait on earth till I am " weary of life, the moſt you can do is to " foreſtall me in the natural rights of ſui- " cide. I have lived in this world as the " only world I have to live in, and have " done all things therein as a man, who acts " without account to an Hereafter. The " moral offices, as they are called, I have " ſometimes regarded as a ſyſtem of worldly " wiſdom, and where they have not croſſed " my purpoſes, or thwarted my pleaſures, I " have occaſionally thought fit to comply

" with them: My proper pride in ſome in-
" ſtances, and ſelf-intereſt in others, have
" diſſuaded me from the open violation of a
" truſt, for it is inconvenient to be detected;
" and though I acknowledge no remon-
" ſtrances from within upon the ſcore of in-
" famy, I do not like the clamours of the
" crowd. As for thoſe mercenary induce-
" ments, which a pretended revelation holds
" forth as lures for patience under wrongs
" and tame reſignation to misfortune, I re-
" gard them as derogatory to my nature;
" they ſink the very character of virtue by
" meanly tendering a reverſionary happi-
" pineſs as the bribe for practiſing it; the
" doctrine therefore of a future life, in which
" the obedient are to expect rewards, and
" the diſobedient are threatened with pu-
" niſhments, confutes itſelf by its own in-
" ternal weakneſs, and is a ſyſtem ſo ſordid
" in its principle, that it can only be cal-
" culated to dupe us into mental ſlavery,
" and frighten us out of that generous pri-
" vilege, which is our univerſal birthright,
" the privilege of diſmiſſing ourſelves out
" of exiſtence, when we are tired with its
" conditions."

Had

Had I fabricated this language for infidelity with the purpoſe of ſtamping greater deteſtation upon its audacity, I had rather bear the blame of having overcharged the character, than to be able (as I now am) to point out a recent publication, which openly avows this ſhameleſs doctrine: But as I do not wiſh to help any anonymous blaſphemer into notice, let the toleration of the times be his ſhelter, and their contempt his anſwer! In the mean time I will take leave to oppoſe to it a ſhort paſſage from a tract, lately tranſlated into Engliſh, intitled *Philoſophical and Critical Enquiries concerning Chriſtianity, by Mr. Bonnet of Geneva*; a work well deſerving an attentive peruſal.

Here I invite that reader, who can elevate his mind to the contemplation of the ways of Providence, to meditate with me on the admirable methods of divine wiſdom in the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity; a religion, the univerſality of which was to comprehend all ages, all places, nations, ranks, and ſituations in life; a religion, which made no diſtinction between the crowned head and that of the loweſt ſubject; formed to diſengage the heart from terreſtrial

trial things, to ennoble, to refine, to ſublime the thoughts and affections of man; to render him conſcious of the dignity of his nature, the importance of his end, to carry his hopes even to eternity, and thus aſſociate him with ſuperior intelligences; a religion, which gave every thing to the ſpirit and nothing to the fleſh; which called its diſciples to the greateſt ſacrifices, becauſe men who are taught to fear God alone, *can undergo the ſevereſt trials; a religion in ſhort (to conclude my weak conceptions on ſo ſublime a ſubject) which was the perfection or completion of natural law, the ſcience of the truly wiſe, the refuge of the humble, the conſolation of the wretched; ſo majeſtic in its ſimplicity, ſo ſublime in its doctrine, ſo great in its object, ſo aſtoniſhing in its effects.—I have endeavoured* (ſays this excellent author in his concluſions) *to explore the inmoſt receſſes of my heart, and having diſcovered no ſecret motive there, which ſhould induce me to reject a religion ſo well calculated to ſupply the defects of my reaſon, to comfort me under affliction and to advance the perfection of my nature, I receive this religion as the greateſt bleſſing Heaven in its goodneſs could confer upon mankind; and I ſhould ſtill receive it with gratitude, were I to conſider*

conſider it only as the very beſt and moſt perfect ſyſtem of practical philoſophy.

(BONNET.)

That man, hurried away by the impetuoſity of his paſſions, is capable of ſtrange and monſtrous irregularities I am not to learn; even vanity and the mean ambition of being eccentric may draw out very wild expreſſions from him in his unguarded hours; but that any creature ſhould be deliberately blaſphemous, and reaſon himſelf (if I may ſo expreſs it) into irrationality, ſurpaſſes my conception, and is a ſpecies of deſperation for which I have no name.

If the voice of univerſal nature, the experience of all ages, the light of reaſon and the immediate evidence of my ſenſes cannot awaken me to a dependence upon my God, a reverence for his religion and an humble opinion of myſelf, what a loſt creature am I!

Where can we meet a more touching deſcription of God's omnipreſence and providence than in the 139th pſalm? and how can I better conclude this paper than by the following humble attempt at a tranſlation of that

that moſt beautiful addreſs to the Creator of mankind.

PSALM CXXXIX.

1 O Lord, who by thy mighty power
Haſt ſearch'd me out in every part,
Thou know'ſt each thought at every hour,
Or e'er it riſes to my heart.

2 In whatſoever path I ſtray,
Where'er I make my bed at night,
No maze can ſo conceal my way,
But I ſtand open to thy ſight.

3 Nor can my tongue pronounce a word,
How ſecretly ſoe'er 'twere ſaid,
But in thine ear it ſhall be heard,
And by thy judgment ſhall be weigh'd.

4 In every particle I ſee
The faſhion of thy plaſtic hand:
5 Knowledge too excellent for me,
Me, wretched man, to underſtand.

6 Whither, ah! whither then can I
From thine all-preſent ſpirit go?
7 To Heav'n? 'tis there thou'rt thron'd on high:
To Hell? 'tis there thou rul'ſt below.

8 Lend me, O Morning, lend me wings!
On the firſt beam of op'ning day
To the laſt wave, that ocean flings
On the world's ſhore, I'll flit away.

9 Ah

9 Ah fool! if there I meant to hide,
For thou, my God, ſhalt reach me there;
Ev'n there thy hand ſhall be my guide,
Thy right hand hold me in its care.

10 Again, if calling out for night,
I bid it ſhroud me from thine eyes,
Thy preſence makes a burſt of light,
And darkneſs to the centre hies.

11 Nay, darkneſs cannot intervene
Betwixt the univerſe and Thee;
Light or no light, there's nought I ween,
God ſelf-illumin'd cannot ſee.

12 Thine is each atom of my frame;
Thy fingers ſtrung my inmoſt reins,
E'en in the womb, or e'er I came
To life and caus'd a mother's pains.

13 Oh! what a fearful work is man!
A wonder of creative art!
My God, how marvellous thy plan!
'Tis character'd upon my heart.

14 My very bones, tho' deep conceal'd
And buried in this living clay,
Are to thy ſearching ſight reveal'd
As clear as in the face of day.

15 That eye, which thro' creation darts,
My ſubſtance, yet imperfect, ſcan'd,
And in thy books my embryo parts
Were written and their uſes plan'd.

16 Ere Time to ſhape and faſhion drew
These ductile members one by one,
Into man's image ere they grew,
Thy great proſpective work was done.

17 O God! how gracious, how divine,
How dear thy counſels to my ſoul!
Myriads to myriads cou'd I join,
They'd fail to number up the whole.

18 I might as well go tell the ſand,
And count it over grain by grain:
No; in thy preſence let me ſtand,
And waking with my God remain.

19 Wilt thou not, Lord, avenge the good?
Shall not blaſphemers be deſtroy'd?
Depart from me, ye men of blood,
Hence murderers, and my ſight avoid!

20 Loud are their hoſtile voices heard
To take thy ſacred name in vain:
21 Am I not griev'd? Doth not each word
Wring my afflicted heart with pain?

Doth not my zealous ſoul return
Hatred for hatred to thy foes?
22 Yea, Lord! I feel my boſom burn,
As tho' againſt my peace they roſe.

23 Try me, dread Power! and ſearch my heart;
Lay all its movements in thy view;
Explore it to its inmoſt part,
Nor ſpare it, if 'tis found untrue.

24 If devious from thy paths I ſtray,
And wickedneſs be found with me,
Oh! lead me back the better way
To everlaſting life and Thee.

No. LXI.

THE deiſtical writers, who would fain perſuade us that the world was in poſſeſſion of as pure a ſyſtem of morality before the introduction of Chriſtianity as ſince, affect to make a great diſplay of the virtues of many eminent heathens, particularly of the philoſophers Socrates, Plato, and ſome others.

When they ſet up theſe characters as examples of perfection, which human nature with the aids of revelation either has not attained to, or not exceeded, they put us upon an invidious taſk, which no man would voluntarily engage in, and challenge us to diſcuſs a queſtion, which, if thoroughly agitated, cannot fail to ſtrip the illuſtrious dead of more than half the honours which the voice of ages has agreed to give them.

It is therefore to be wiſhed that they had held the argument to its general terms, and ſhewn us where that ſyſtem of ethics is to be found, which they are prepared to bring into compariſon with the moral doctrines of Chriſt. This I take to be the fair ground whereon the controverſy ſhould have been decided, and here it would infallibly have been brought to iſſue; but they knew their weapons better than to truſt them in ſo cloſe a conflict.

The maxims of ſome heathen philoſophers, and the moral writings of Plato, Cicero, and Seneca, contain many noble truths, worthy to be held in veneration by poſterity; and if the deiſt can from theſe produce a ſyſtem of morality as pure and perfect as that which claims its origin from divine revelation, he will prove that God gave to man a faculty of diſtinguiſhing between right and wrong with ſuch correctneſs, that his own immediate revelation added no lights to thoſe, which the powers of reaſon had already diſcovered. Let us grant therefore for a moment, that Chriſt's religion revealed to the world no new truths in morality, nor removed any old errors, and what triumph accrues to the deiſt by the

the admiſſion? The moſt he gains is to bring reaſon to a level with revelation, as to its moral doctrines; in ſo doing he dignifies man's nature, and ſhews how excellent a faculty God gave his creatures in their original formation, to guide their judgments and controul their actions; but will this diminiſh the importance of revealed religion? Certainly not, unleſs he can prove one or both of the following poſitions; viz.

Firſt, That the moral tenets of Chriſtianity either fall ſhort of, or run counter to, the moral tenets of natural religion; or,

Secondly, That Chriſt's miſſion was nugatory and ſuperfluous, becauſe the world was already in poſſeſſion of as good a ſyſtem of morality as he imparted to mankind.

As to the firſt, I believe it has never been attempted by any heathen or deiſtical advocate to convict the Goſpel ſyſtem of falſe morality, or to alledge that it is ſhort and defective in any one particular duty, when compared with that ſyſtem which the world was poſſeſt of without its aid. No man, I believe, has controverted its truths, though many have diſputed its diſcoveries: No man

man has been hardy enough to ſay of any of its doctrines—*This we ought not to practiſe*; though many have been vain enough to cry out—*All this we knew before.*—Let us leave this poſition therefore for the preſent, and paſs to the next, viz. Whether Chriſt's miſſion was nugatory and ſuperfluous, becauſe the world already knew as much morality as he taught them.

This will at once be anſwered, if the Goſpel aſſertion be eſtabliſhed, that life and immortality were brought to light. We need not adduce any other of the myſteries of revelation; we may ſafely reſt the queſtion here, and ſay with the apoſtle to the Gentile world—*Behold! I ſhew you a myſtery: We ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the laſt trump (for the trumpet ſhall ſound) and the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, and we ſhall be changed.* Mark to how ſhort an iſſue the argument is now brought! Either the apoſtle is not warranted in calling this a *myſtery*, or the deiſt is not warranted in calling Chriſt's miſſion nugatory and ſuperfluous.

It

It now reſts with the deiſt to produce from the writings and opinions of mankind antecedent to Chriſtianity, ſuch a revelation of things to come, as can fully anticipate the Goſpel revelation, or elſe to admit with the apoſtle that *a myſtery was ſhewn*; and if the importance of this *myſtery* be admitted, as it ſurely muſt, the importance of Chriſt's miſſion can no longer be diſputed; and though revelation ſhall have added nothing to the heathen ſyſtem of morality, ſtill it does not follow that it was ſuperfluous and nugatory.

Let the deiſt reſort to the heathen Elyſium and the realms of Pluto in ſearch of evidences, to ſet in competition with the Chriſtian revelation of a future ſtate; let him call in Socrates, Plato, and as many more as he can collect in his cauſe; it is but loſt labour to follow the various tracks of reaſon through the pathleſs ocean of conjecture, always wandering, though with different degrees of deviation. What does it avail, though Seneca had taught as good morality as Chriſt himſelf preached from the Mount? How does it affect revealed religion, though Tully's Offices were found

ſuperior

ſuperior to Saint Paul's Epiſtles? Let the deiſt indulge himſelf in declaiming on the virtues of the heathen heroes and philoſophers; let him ranſack the annals of the Chriſtian world, and preſent us with legions of cruſaders drenched in human blood, furious fanatics ruſhing on each other's throats for the diſtinction of a word, maſſacring whole nations and laying nature waſte for a metaphyſical quibble, it touches not religion; let him array a hoſt of perſecuting Inquiſitors with all their torturing engines, the picture indeed is terrible, but who will ſay it is the picture of Chriſtianity?

When we conſider the ages, which have elapſed ſince the introduction of Chriſtianity, and the events attending its propagation, how wonderful is the hiſtory we contemplate! We ſee a mighty light ſpreading over all mankind from one ſpark kindled in an obſcure corner of the earth: An humble perſecuted teacher preaches a religion of peace, of forgiveneſs of injuries, of ſubmiſſion to temporal authorities, of meekneſs, piety, brotherly love and univerſal benevolence; he is tried, condemned, and executed for his doctrines; he riſes from the tomb,

and,

and, breaking down the doors of death, ſets open to all mankind the evidence of a life to come, and at the ſame time points out the ſure path to everlaſting happineſs in that future ſtate: A few unlettered diſciples, his adherents and ſurvivors, take up his doctrines, and going forth amongſt the provinces of the Roman empire, then in its zenith, preach a religion to the Gentiles, directly ſtriking at the foundation of the moſt ſplendid fabric Superſtition ever reared on earth: Theſe Gentiles are not a rude and barbarous race, but men of illuminated minds, acute philoſophers, eloquent orators, powerful reaſoners, eminent in arts and ſciences, and armed with ſovereign power: What an undertaking for the teachers of Chriſtianity! What a conflict for a religion, holding forth no temporal allurements! On the contrary, promiſing nothing but mortification in this world, and referring all hope of a reward for preſent ſufferings to the unſeen glories of a life to come.

The next ſcene which this review preſents to us, ſhews the followers of Chriſtianity ſuffering under perſecution by the heathen,

whom their numbers had alarmed, and who began to tremble for their gods: In the revolution of ages the church becomes triumphant, and, made wanton by proſperity, degenerates from its primitive ſimplicity, and running into idle controverſies and metaphyſical ſchiſms, perſecutes its ſeceding brethren with unremitting fury; whilſt the Popes, thundering out anathemas and hurling torches from their throne, ſeem the vicegerents of the furies rather than of the author of a religion of peace: The preſent time affords a different view; the temper of the church grown milder, though its zeal leſs fervent; men of different communions begin to draw nearer to each other; as refinement of manners becomes more general, toleration ſpreads; we are no longer ſlaves to the laws of religion, but converts to the reaſon of it; and being allowed to examine the evidence and foundation of the faith that is in us, we diſcover that Chriſtianity is a religion of charity, toleration, reaſon and peace, enjoining us to *have compaſſion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering railing for railing, but contrariwiſe bleſſing; knowing that we are thereunto called, that we ſhould inherit a bleſſing.*

No. LXII.

DARK and erroneous as the minds of men in general were before the appearance of Chriſt, no friend to Revelation ever meant to ſay, that all the groſs and glaring abſurdities of the heathen ſyſtem, as vulgarly profeſſed, were univerſally adopted, and that no thinking man amongſt them entertained better conceptions of God's nature and attributes, juſter notions of his ſuperintendance and providence, purer maxims of morality, and more elevated expectations of a future ſtate, than are to be found in the extravagant accounts of their eſtabliſhed theology. No thinking man could ſeriouſly ſubſcribe his belief to ſuch fabulous and chimerical legends; and indeed it appears that opinions were permitted to paſs without cenſure, very irreconcileable to the popular faith, and great latitude given to ſpeculation in their reaſonings upon natural religion; and what can be more gratifying to philanthropy, than to trace theſe efforts of right reaſon, which redound to the honour of man's nature, and exhibit to

our view the human underſtanding, unaſſiſted by the lights of revelation and ſupported only by it's natural powers, emerging from the darkneſs of idolatry, and breaking forth into the following deſcription of the Supreme Being, which is faithfully tranſlated from the fragment of an antient Greek tragic poet?—

"Let not mortal corruption mix with "your idea of God, nor think of him as of "a corporeal being, ſuch as thyſelf; he is "inſcrutable to man, now appearing like "fire, implacable in his anger; now in "thick darkneſs, now in the flood of wa-"ters; now he puts on the terrors of a ra-"vening beaſt, of the thunder, the winds, "the lightning, of conflagrations, of clouds: "Him the ſeas obey, the ſavage rocks, the "ſprings of freſh water, and the rivers that "flow along their winding channels; the "earth herſelf ſtands in awe of him; the "high tops of the mountains, the wide "expanſe of the cærulean ocean tremble at "the frown of their Lord and Ruler."

This is a ſtrain in the ſublime ſtile of the Pſalmiſt, and ſimilar ideas of the Supreme Being

Being may be collected from the remains of various heathen writers.

Antiphanes, the Socratic philoſopher, ſays, "That God is the reſemblance of nothing "upon earth, ſo that no conception can be "derived from any effigy or likeneſs of the "Author of the univerſe."

Xenophon obſerves, "That a Being, who "controuls and governs all things, muſt "needs be great and powerful, but being "by his nature inviſible, no man can diſ-"cern what form or ſhape he is of."

Thales, being aſked to define the Deity, replied that "He was without beginning "and without end." Being further interrogated, "If the actions of men could eſ-"cape the intelligence of God?" he anſwered, "No, nor even their thoughts."

Philemon, the comic poet, introduces the following queſtion and anſwer in a dialogue: "Tell me, I beſeech you, what is "your conception of God?—As of a Be-"ing, who, ſeeing all things, is himſelf "unſeen."

Menander ſays, that "God, the lord and "father of all things, is alone worthy of

" our humble adoration, being at once the " maker and the giver of all bleſſings."

Melanippidas, a writer alſo of comedy, introduces this ſolemn invocation to the Supreme Being, " Hear me, O Father, whom " the whole world regards with wonder and " adores! to whom the immortal ſoul of " man is precious."

Euripides in a ſtrain of great ſublimity exclaims, " Thee I invoke, the ſelf-created " Being, who framed all nature in thy ethe- " real mould, whom light and darkneſs and " the whole multitude of the ſtarry train " encircle in eternal chorus."

Sophocles alſo in a fragment of one of his tragedies aſſerts the unity of the Supreme Being; " Of a truth there is one, and only " one God, the maker of heaven and earth, " the ſea and all which it contains."

Theſe ſelections, to which however many others might be added, will ſerve to ſhew what enlightened ideas were entertained by ſome of the nature of God. I will next adduce a few paſſages to ſhew what juſt conceptions ſome had formed of God's providence and juſtice, of the diſtribution of good and evil in this life, and of the expectation

pectation of a future retribution in the life to come.

Ariſton, the dramatic poet, hath bequeathed us the following part of a dialogue—

" Take heart; be patient! God will not " fail to help the good, and eſpecially thoſe, " who are as excellent as yourſelf; where " would be the encouragement to perſiſt in " righteouſneſs, unleſs thoſe, who do well, " are eminently to be rewarded for their " well-doing?

" I would it were as you ſay! but I too " often ſee men, who ſquare their actions to " the rules of rectitude, oppreſſed with mis- " fortunes; whilſt they, who have nothing " at heart but their own ſelfiſh intereſt and " advantage, enjoy proſperity unknown to " us.

" For the preſent moment it may be ſo, " but we muſt look beyond the preſent " moment and await the iſſue, when this " earth ſhall be diſſolved: For to think " that chance governs the affairs of this " life, is a notion as falſe as it is evil, and is " the plea, which vicious men ſet up for " vicious morals: But be thou ſure that

" the good works of the righteous ſhall
" meet a reward, and the iniquities of the
" unrighteous a puniſhment; for nothing
" can come to paſs in this world, but by
" the will and permiſſion of God."

Epicharmus, the oldeſt of the comic poets, ſays in one of the few fragments which remain of his writings, " If your life hath been
" holy, you need have no dread of death,
" for the ſpirit of the bleſt ſhall exiſt for
" ever in heaven."

Euripides has the following paſſage, " If
" any mortal flatters himſelf that the ſin
" which he commits, can eſcape the notice
" of an avenging Deity, he indulges a vain
" hope, deceiving himſelf in a falſe pre-
" ſumption of impunity, becauſe the di-
" vine juſtice ſuſpends for a time the pu-
" niſhment of his evil actions; but hearken
" to me, ye who ſay there is no God, and
" by that wicked infidelity enhance your
" crimes, There is, there is a God! Let
" the evil doer then account the preſent
" hour only as gain, for he is doomed to
" everlaſting puniſhment in the life to
" come."

The

The Sibylline verſes hold the ſame language, but theſe I have taken notice of in a former volume.

I reſerve myſelf for one more extract, which I ſhall recommend to the reader as the fineſt, which can be inſtanced from any heathen writer, exhibiting the moſt elevated conceptions of the being and ſuperintendance of one, ſupreme, all-ſeeing, ineffable God, and of the exiſtence of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, by the juſt diſtribution of which to the good and evil, all the ſeeming irregularities of moral juſtice in this life ſhall hereafter be ſet ſtrait; and this, if I miſtake not, is the ſummary of all that natural religion can attain to. The following is a cloſe tranſlation of this famous fragment—

" Thinkeſt thou, O Niceratus, that thoſe " departed ſpirits, who are ſatiated with the " luxuries of life, ſhall eſcape as if from an " oblivious God? The eye of juſtice is " wakeful and all-ſeeing; and we may truly " pronounce that there are two ſeveral roads " conducting us to the grave; one proper to " the juſt, the other to the unjuſt; for " if juſt and unjuſt fare alike, and the " grave ſhall cover both to all eternity—

" Hence! get thee hence at once! deſtroy,
" lay waſte, defraud, confound at pleaſure!
" But deceive not thyſelf; there is a judg-
" ment after death, which God, the lord
" of all things, will exact, whoſe tremen-
" dous name is not to be uttered by my
" lips, and He it is, who limits the ap-
" pointed date of the tranſgreſſor."

It is curious to diſcover ſentiments of this venerable ſort in the fragment of a Greek comedy, yet certain it is that it has either *Philemon* or *Diphilus* for it's author, both writers of the New Comedy and contemporaries. Juſtin, Clemens, and Euſebius have all quoted it, the former from *Philemon*, both the latter from *Diphilus:* Grotius and Le Clerc follow the authority of Juſtin, and inſert it in their collection of *Philemon*'s fragments; Hertelius upon the joint authorities of Clemens and Euſebius gives it to *Diphilus*, and publiſhes it as ſuch in his valuable and rare remains of the Greek comic writers. I conceive there are now no *data*, upon which criticiſm can decide for either of theſe two claimants, and the honour muſt accordingly remain ſuſpended between them.

Sentences of this ſort are certainly very precious reliques, and their preſervation is owing to a happy cuſtom, which the Greeks had of marking the margins of their books oppoſite to any paſſage which particularly ſtruck them, and this mark was generally the letter χ, the initial of χρηστὸν, [uſeful] and the collection afterwards made of theſe diſtinguiſhed paſſages they called χρηστομάθειαν.

It would be a curious and amuſing collation of moral and religious ſentences, extracted from heathen writers, with correſponding texts, ſelected from the holy ſcriptures: Grotius hath done ſomething towards it in his preface to the *Collectanea* of Stobæus; but the quotations already given will ſuffice to ſhew in a general point of view what had been the advances of human reaſon before God enlightened the world by his ſpecial Revelation.

No. LXIII.

IF the deiſt, who contends for the all-ſufficiency of natural religion, ſhall think that in theſe paſſages, which I have quoted in the preceding number, he has diſcovered freſh reſources on the part of human reaſon as oppoſed to divine revelation, he will find himſelf involved in a very falſe concluſion. Though it were in my power to have collected every moral and religious ſentence, which has fallen from the pens of the heathen writers antecedent to Chriſtianity, and although it ſhould thereby appear that the morality of the goſpel had been the morality of right reaſon in all ages of the world, he would ſtill remain as much unfurniſhed as ever for eſtabliſhing his favorite poſition, that the ſcriptures reveal nothing more than man's underſtanding had diſcovered without their aid. We may therefore conſole ourſelves without ſcruple in diſcovering that the heathen world was not immerſed in total darkneſs, and the candid mind, however intereſted for Chriſtianity, may be gratified with the reflection that the human underſtanding

ſtanding was not ſo wholly enſlaved, but that in certain inſtances it could ſurmount the prejudices of ſyſtem, and, caſting off the ſhackles of idolatry, argue up to that ſupreme of all things, which the hiſtorian Tacitus emphatically defines, *ſummum illud et æternum neque mutabile neque interiturum.*

Now when the mind is ſettled in the proof of One Supreme Being, there are two ſeveral modes of reaſoning, by which natural religion may deduce the probability of a future ſtate: one of theſe reſults from an examination of the human ſoul, the other from reflecting on the unequal diſtribution of happineſs in the preſent life.

Every man, who is capable of examining his own faculties, muſt diſcern a certain power within him, which is neither coæval with, nor dependant upon his body and it's members; I mean that power of reflection, which we univerſally agree to ſeat in the ſoul: It is not coæval with the body, becauſe we were not in the uſe and exerciſe of it, when we were infants; it is not dependant on it, becauſe it is not ſubject to the changes, which the body undergoes in it's paſſage from the womb to the grave; for inſtance,

inſtance, it is not deſtroyed, or even impaired, by amputation of the limbs or members, it does not evaporate by the continual flux and exhalation of the corporeal humours, is not diſturbed by motion of the limbs, nor deprived of it's powers by their inaction; it is not neceſſarily involved in the ſickneſs and infirmity of the body, for whilſt that is decaying and diſſolving away by an incurable diſeaſe, the intellectual faculties ſhall in many caſes remain perfect and unimpaired: Why then ſhould it be ſuppoſed the ſoul of a man is to die with his body, and accompany it into the oblivious grave, when it did not make it's entrance with it into life, nor partook of it's decay, it's fluctuations, changes and caſualties?

If theſe obvious reflections upon the nature and properties of the ſoul lead to the perſuaſion of a future ſtate, the ſame train of reaſoning will naturally diſcover that the condition of the ſoul in that future ſtate muſt be determined by the merits or demerits of it's antecedent life. It has never been the notion of heathen or of deiſt, that both the good and the evil ſhall enter upon equal and undiſtinguiſhed felicity or puniſhment;

ment; no reaſoning man could ever conceive that the ſoul of Nero and the ſoul of Antoninus in a future ſtate partook of the ſame common lot; and thus it follows upon the evidence of reaſon, that the ſoul of man ſhall be rewarded or puniſhed hereafter according to his good or evil conduct here; and this conſequence is the more obvious, becauſe it does not appear in the moral government of the world, that any ſuch juſt and regular diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments obtains on this ſide the grave; a circumſtance no otherwiſe to be reconciled to our ſuitable conceptions of divine juſtice, than by referring things to the final deciſion of a judgment to come.

Though all theſe diſcoveries are open to reaſon, let no man conclude that what the reaſon of a few diſcovered were either communicated to, or acknowledged by all: No; the world was dark and groſsly ignorant; ſome indeed have argued well and clearly; others confuſedly, and the bulk of mankind not at all; the being of a God, and the unity of that Supreme Being ſtruck conviction to the hearts of thoſe, who employed their reaſon coolly and diſpaſſionately in ſuch ſublime

ſublime enquiries; but where was the multitude meanwhile? Bewildered with a mob of deities, whom their own fables had endowed with human attributes, paſſions and infirmities; whom their own ſuperſtition had deified and enrolled amongſt the immortals, till the ſacred hiſtory of Olympus became no leſs impure than the journals of a brothel: Many there were no doubt, who ſaw the monſtrous abſurdity of ſuch a ſyſtem, yet not every one, who diſcerned error, could diſcover truth; the immortality of the ſoul, a doctrine ſo harmonious to man's nature, was decried by ſyſtem and oppoſed by ſubtilty; the queſtion of a future ſtate was hung up in doubt, or bandied between conflicting diſputants through all the quirks and evaſions of ſophiſtry and logic: Philoſophy, ſo called, was ſplit into a variety of ſects, and the hypotheſis of each enthuſiaſtic founder became the ſtanding creed of his ſchool, which it was an inviolable point of honour never to deſert: In this confuſion of ſyſtems men choſe for themſelves not according to conviction, but by the impulſe of paſſion, or from motives of convenience; the voluptuary was intereſted to diſmiſs the gods

gods to their repoſe, that his might not be interrupted by them; and all, who wiſhed to have their range of ſenſuality in this world without fear or controul, readily enliſted under the banners of Epicurus, till his followers outnumbered all the reſt; this was the court-creed under the worſt of the Roman emperors, and the whole body of the nation, with few exceptions, adopted it; for what could be more natural, than for the deſperate to bury conſcience in the grave of atheiſm, or ruſh into annihilation by the point of the poniard, when they were weary of exiſtence and diſcarded by fortune? With ſome it was the ſtandard principle of their ſect to doubt, with others to argue every thing; and when we recollect that Cicero himſelf was of the *New Academy*, we have a clue to unravel all the ſeeming contradictions of his moral and metaphyſical ſentiments, amidſt the confuſion of which we are never to expect his real opinion, but within the pale of his own particular ſchool, and that ſchool profeſſed controverſy upon every point. I will inſtance one paſſage, which would have done honour to his ſentiments, had he ſpoke his own language

guage as well as that of the Platoniſts, whom he is here perſonating--*Nec vero Deus, qui intelligitur a nobis, alio modo intelligi poteſt, quam mens ſoluta quædam et libera, ſegregata ab omni concretione mortali, omnia ſentiens et movens.* Whilſt the pureſt truths were thrown out only as themes for ſophiſtry to cavil at, the maſs of mankind reſembled a chaos, in which if ſome few ſparks of light glimmered, they only ſerved to caſt the general horror into darker ſhades.

It muſt not however be forgotten, that there was a peculiar people then upon earth, who profeſſed to worſhip that one Supreme Being, of whoſe nature and attributes certain individuals only amongſt the Gentile nations entertained ſuitable conceptions.

Whilſt all the known world were idolaters by eſtabliſhment, the Jews alone were Unitarians upon ſyſtem. Their hiſtory was moſt wonderful, for it undertook to give a relation of things, whereof no human records could poſſibly be taken, and all, who received it for truth, muſt receive it as the relation of God himſelf, for how elſe ſhould men obtain a knowledge of the Creator's thoughts and operations in the firſt formation of all things?

things? Accordingly we find their inſpired hiſtorian, after he has brought down his narration to the journal of his own time, holding conferences with God himſelf, and receiving through his immediate communication certain laws and commandments, which he was to deliver to the people, and according to which they were to live and be governed. In this manner Moſes appears as the commiſſioned legiſlator of a Theocracy, impowered to work miracles in confirmation of his vicegerent authority, and to denounce the moſt tremendous puniſhments upon the nation, ſo highly favoured, if in any future time they ſhould diſobey and fall off from theſe ſacred ſtatutes and ordinances.

A people under ſuch a government, ſet apart and diſtinguiſhed from all other nations by means ſo ſupernatural, form a very intereſting object for our contemplation, and their hiſtory abounds in events no leſs extraordinary and miraculous than the revelation itſelf of thoſe laws, upon which their conſtitution was firſt eſtabliſhed: Their tedious captivities, their wonderful deliverances, the adminiſtration of their prieſts and prophets,

prophets, their triumphs and ſucceſſes, whilſt adhering to God's worſhip, and their deplorable condition, when they corrupted his ſervice with the impurities of the idolatrous nations, whom they drove from their poſſeſſions, form a moſt ſurprizing chain of incidents, to which the annals of no other people upon earth can be ſaid to bear reſemblance.

Had it ſuited the all-wiſe purpoſes of God, when he revealed himſelf to this peculiar people, to have made them the inſtruments for diſſeminating the knowledge of his true religion and worſhip over the Gentile world, their office and adminiſtration had been glorious indeed; but this part was either not allotted to them, or juſtly forfeited by their degenerate and abandoned conduct: diſobedient and rebellious againſt God's ordinances, they were ſo far from propagating theſe imparted lights to the neighbouring nations, that they themſelves ſunk into their darkneſs, and whilſt all the land was over-run with idols, few were the knees which bowed to the living, true and only God.

Moſes,

Moſes, their inſpired lawgiver, judge and prophet, is generally ſaid to have delivered to them no doctrine of a future ſtate: I am aware there is a learned author now living, one of their nation, *David Levi* by name, who controverts this aſſertion; it is fit therefore I ſhould leave it in reference to his future proofs, when he ſhall ſee proper to produce them; in the mean time I may fairly ſtate it upon this alternative, that if Moſes did not impart the doctrine above-mentioned, it was wholly reſerved for future ſpecial revelation; if he did impart it, there muſt have been an obſtinate want of faith in great part of the Jewiſh nation, who knowingly profeſſed a contrary doctrine, or elſe there muſt have been ſome obſcurity in Moſes's account, if they innocently miſunderſtood it: The Sadducees were a great portion of the Jewiſh community, and if they were inſtructed by their lawgiver to believe and expect a future ſtate, it is high matter of offence in them to have diſobeyed their teacher; on the other hand, if they were not inſtructed to this effect by Moſes, yet having been taught the knowledge of

one

one all-righteous God, it becomes juſt matter of ſurprize, how they came to overlook a conſequence ſo evident.

No. LXIV.

FROM the review we have taken of the ſtate of mankind in reſpect to their religious opinions at the Chriſtian æra it appears, that the Gentile world was ſyſtematically devoted to idolatry, whilſt the remnant of the Jewiſh tribes profeſſed the worſhip of the true God; but at the ſame time there did not exiſt on earth any other temple dedicated to God's ſervice, ſave that at Jeruſalem. The nation ſo highly favoured by him, and ſo enlightened by his immediate revelations, was in the loweſt ſtate of political and religious declenſion; ten out of their twelve tribes had been carried away into captivity, from which there has to this hour been no redemption, and the remaining two were brought under the Roman yoke, and divided into ſects, one of which oppoſed the opinion of the other, and maintained that there was to be no reſurrection of the dead:

The

The controverſy was momentous, for the eternal welfare of mankind was the object of diſcuſſion, and who was to decide upon it? The worſhippers of the true God had one place only upon earth, wherein to call upon his name; the groves and altars of the idols occupied all the reſt: Who was to reſtore his worſhip? Who was to redeem mankind from almoſt total ignorance and corruption? Where was *the light*, that was *to lighten the Gentiles?* Reaſon could do no more; it could only argue for the probability of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, but demonſtration was required; an evidence, that might remove all doubts, and this was not in the power of man to furniſh: Some Being therefore muſt appear of more than human talents to inſtruct mankind, of more than human authority to reform them: The world was loſt, unleſs it ſhould pleaſe God to interpoſe, for the work was above human hands, and nothing but the power which created the world, could ſave the world.

Let any man caſt his ideas back to this period, and aſk his reaſon, if it was not natural to ſuppoſe that the Almighty Being, to whom this general ruin and diſorder muſt be

be viſible, would in mercy to his creatures ſend ſome help amongſt them; unleſs it had been his purpoſe to abandon them to deſtruction, we may preſume to ſay he ſurely would: Is it then with man to preſcribe in what particular mode and form that redemption ſhould come? Certainly it is not with man, but with God only; he, who grants the vouchſafement, will direct the means: Be theſe what they may, they muſt be preternatural and miraculous, becauſe we have agreed that it is beyond the reach of man by any natural powers of his own to accompliſh: A ſpecial inſpiration then is requiſite; ſome revelation it ſhould ſeem, we know not what, we know not how, nor where, nor whence, except that it muſt come from God himſelf: What if he ſends a Being upon earth to tell us his immediate will, to teach us how to pleaſe him, and to convince us of the reality of a future ſtate? That Being then muſt come down from him, he muſt have powers miraculous, he muſt have qualities divine and perfect, he muſt return on earth from the grave, and perſonally ſhew us that he has ſurvived it, and is corporeally living after death: Will this be evidence

evidence demonſtrative? Who can withſtand it? He muſt be of all men moſt obſtinately bent upon his own deſtruction, who ſhould attempt to hold out againſt it; he muſt prefer darkneſs to light, falſehood to truth, miſery to happineſs, hell to heaven, who would not thankfully embrace ſo great ſalvation.

Let us now apply what has been ſaid to the appearance of that perſon, whom the Chriſtian church believes to have been the true Meſſias of God, and let us examine the evidences, upon which we aſſert the divinity of his miſſion and the completion of it's purpoſes.

In what form and after what manner was he ſent amongſt us? was it by natural or præternatural means? if his firſt appearance is uſhered in by a miracle, will it not be an evidence in favour of God's ſpecial revelation? If he is preſented to the world in ſome mode ſuperior to and differing from the ordinary courſe of nature, ſuch an introduction muſt attract to his perſon and character a more than ordinary attention: If a miraculous and myſterious Being appears upon earth, ſo compounded of divine and

human nature as to ſurpaſs our comprehenſion of his immediate eſſence, and at the ſame time ſo levelled to our earthly ideas, as to be viſibly born of a human mother, not impregnated after the manner of the fleſh, but by the immediate Spirit of God, in other words the ſon of a pure virgin, ſhall we make the myſterious incarnation of ſuch a præternatural being a reaſon for our diſbelief in that revelation, which without a miracle we had not given credit to? We are told that the birth of Chriſt was in this wiſe; the fact reſts upon the authority of the evangeliſts who deſcribe it: The Unitarians, who profeſs Chriſtianity with this exception, may diſpute the teſtimony of the ſacred writers in this particular, and the Jews may deny their account *in toto*, but ſtill if Chriſt himſelf performed miracles, which the Jews do not deny, and if he roſe from the dead after his crucifixion, which the Unitarians admit, I do not ſee how either ſhould be ſtaggered by the miracle of his birth: for of the Jews I may demand, whether it were not a thing as credible for God to have wrought a miracle at the birth of Moſes for inſtance, as that he ſhould afterwards

afterwards empower that prophet to perform, not one only, but many miracles? To the Unitarians I would candidly ſubmit, if it be not as eaſy to believe the incarnation of Chriſt as his reſurrection, the authorities for each being the ſame? Let the authorities therefore be the teſt!

I am well aware that the ſilence of two of the evangeliſts is ſtated by the Unitarians amongſt other objections againſt the account, and the non-accordance of the genealogies given by Saint Matthew and Saint Luke is urged againſt the Chriſtian church by the author of *Lingua Sacra*, in a pamphlet lately publiſhed, in the following words—*The Evangeliſt Saint Matthew in the firſt chapter of his goſpel gives us the genealogy of Chriſt, and Luke in the third chapter of his goſpel does the ſame; but with ſuch difference, that an unprejudiced perſon would hardly think they belonged to one and the ſame perſon; for the latter not only differs from the former in almoſt the whole genealogy from Joſeph to David, but has alſo added a few more generations, and likewiſe made Jeſus to deſcend from Nathan the ſon of David inſtead of Solomon.—(Levi's Letter to Dr. Prieſtley, p. 81.)*

The learned Jew is founded in his obſervation upon the non-accordance of theſe pedigrees, but not in applying that to Chriſt, which relates only to Joſeph. Saint Matthew gives the genealogy of Joſeph, whom he denominates *the huſband of Mary, of whom was born Jeſus, who is called Chriſt*, C. 1. *v.* 16. Saint Luke with equal preciſion ſays, that *Jeſus himſelf began to be about thirty years of age, being, as was ſuppoſed, the ſon of Joſeph.* Now when it is thus clear that both theſe genealogies apply to Joſeph, and both theſe evangeliſts expreſsly aſſert that Jeſus was born of an immaculate virgin, I do not think it a fair ſtatement to call it the genealogy of Chriſt for the purpoſe of diſcrediting the veracity of theſe evangeliſts in points of faith or doctrine, merely becauſe they differ in a family catalogue of the generations of Joſeph, one of which is carried up to Adam, and the other brought down from Abraham. The goſpel hiſtorians, as I underſtand them, profeſs ſeverally to render a true account of Chriſt's miſſion, compriſing only a ſhort period of his life; within the compaſs of this period they are to record the doctrines he preached, the miracles

miracles he performed, and the circumſtances of his death, paſſion, and reſurrection; to this undertaking they are fairly committed; this they are to execute as faithful reporters, and if their reports ſhall be found in any eſſential matter contradictory to each other or themſelves, let the learned author late mentioned, or any other opponent to Chriſtianity point it out, and candour muſt admit the charge; but in the matter of a pedigree, which appertains to Joſeph, which our church univerſally omits in it's ſervice, which compriſes no article of doctrine, and which, being purely matter of family record, was copied probably from one roll by Matthew, and from another by Luke, I cannot in truth and ſincerity ſee how the ſacred hiſtorians are impeached by the non-agreement of their accounts. We call them the *inſpired* writers, and when any ſuch trivial contradiction as the above can be fixed upon them by the enemies of our faith, the word is retorted upon us with triumph; but what has inſpiration to do with the genealogy of Joſeph, *the ſuppoſed*, not the real, father of Jeſus? And indeed what more is required

for the ſimple narration of any facts than a faithful memory, and ſincere adherence to truth?

Let this ſuffice for what relates to the birth of Chriſt, and the different ways in which men argue upon that myſterious event: If his coming was foretold, and if his perſon and character fully anſwer to thoſe predictions, no man will deny the force of ſuch an evidence: If we are ſimply told that a *virgin did conceive and bear a ſon*, it is a circumſtance ſo much out of the ordinary courſe of nature to happen, that it requires great faith in the veracity of the relater to believe it; but if we are poſſeſſed of an authentic record of high antecedent antiquity, wherein we find it expreſsly predicted, that ſuch a circumſtance ſhall happen, and that *a virgin ſhall conceive and bear a ſon*, it is ſuch a confirmation of the fact, that, wonderful as it is, we can no longer doubt the truth of the hiſtorians who atteſt it. Now it is not one, but many prophets, who concur in foretelling the coming of the Meſſias; his perſon, his office, his humility and ſufferings, his ignominious death and the glorious benefits reſulting from his atonement.

atonement, are not merely glanced at with ænigmatic obſcurity, but pointedly and preciſely announced. Had ſuch evidences met for the verification of any hiſtorical event unconnected with religion, I ſuppoſe there is no man, who could compare the one with the other, but would admit it's full concordance and completion; and is it not a ſtrange perverſeneſs of mind, if we are obſtinate in doubting it, only becauſe we are ſo deeply intereſted to believe it?

I have ſaid there was but one temple upon earth, where the only true and living God was worſhipped, the temple at Jeruſalem: The Jews had derived and continued this worſhip from the time of Abraham, and to him the promiſes were made, that *in his ſeed all the nations of the world ſhould be bleſſed*. Where then are we naturally to look for the Meſſias but from the ſtock of Abraham, from the deſcendants of that family, in which alone were preſerved the knowledge and worſhip of the only true God? If therefore the religion, which Chriſt founded, does in fact hold forth that bleſſing to all the nations of the world, then was that promiſe fulfilled in the perſon of Chriſt, *who took upon him the ſeed of Abraham.*

No. LXV.

We are next to enquire if the character and commiſſion of the Meſſias were marked by ſuch performances, as might well be expected from a perſon, whoſe introduction into the world was of ſo extraordinary a nature.

We are told by one of the ſacred hiſtorians, that *the Jews came round about him and ſaid unto him, How long doſt thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Chriſt, tell us plainly: Jeſus anſwered them, I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my father's name, they bear witneſs of me.*

In this paſſage Chriſt himſelf appeals to his works done in the name of God, to witneſs againſt all cavils for his being the true Meſſias. The ſame queſtion was put to him by the diſciples of the Baptiſt, *Art thou he that ſhould come, or do we look for another?* The ſame appeal is made to his works in the reply he gives to theſe enquirers.

It follows next in order that we ſhould aſk what theſe works were, and it ſo happens,

pens, that the perſon who performed them, has himſelf enumerated them in the follow-words: *The blind receive their ſight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed and the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed up and the poor have the goſpel preached unto them.* Theſe are works it muſt be acknowledged of a moſt benevolent ſort; they are not indeed ſo ſplendid as the miraculous act of dividing the Red Sea for the people of Iſrael to march through it, and again commanding it to cloſe upon their purſuers in the rear and ſwallow up the army of Pharaoh; they are not of ſo tremendous a character as thoſe afflicting plagues with which Moſes puniſhed the Egyptians; but would theſe, or ſuch as theſe, have been characteriſtic of a mediator? Chriſt came to ſave and not to deſtroy the world, and the works above deſcribed are no leſs merciful in their nature, than miraculous.

When the Jews therefore tauntingly aſſert the ſuperior magnificence of the miracles wrought by Moſes, which we admit to have been in all reſpects ſuitable to the commiſſion which Moſes was encharged with, they ſhould with equal candor admit,

that the leſs ſplendid, but more ſalutary, miracles of Chriſt, were no leſs ſuited to the merciful commiſſion, which he came amongſt us to perform. There is indeed more horrible grandeur in the ſpectacle of a vaſt army ſwallowed up by the ſea, miraculouſly divided into a wall on each ſide of thoſe who paſſed through it; but who will ſay that God's power is not as wonderfully and conſpicuouſly diſplayed in reſtoring dead Lazarus to life, as in drowning Pharaoh and his hoſt? Surely it is as great a miracle to give life to the dead, as it is to put the living to death.

The miracles of Chriſt were performed without oſtentation and diſplay, yet they were of ſuch general notoriety, that the Jews themſelves did not, and do not even now, deny their being wrought by him, but aſcribed them to the aid and agency of the Devil: A miſerable ſubterfuge indeed! But this is not all: A contemporary writer of that nation, *David Levi*, in his letter to Dr. Prieſtley aſſerts, that there was not only *no ſuch neceſſity* for the miracles of Jeſus as for thoſe of Moſes, but *that they were ſcarcely juſt or rational, and conſequently cannot be*

be offered as proofs of his divine miſſion in compariſon with that of Moſes. p. 67. 68.

In ſupport of this aſſertion the learned controverſialiſt obſerves, *that as to the miracles of Moſes, there was the greateſt neceſſity for them; for inſtance, the plagues he brought upon the Egyptians were neceſſary for the redemption of the Jewiſh nation; as was the dividing of the Red Sea, and the drowning the Egyptians for their further deliverance from them; the manna from heaven and the water from the rock were neceſſary for their ſubſiſtence in the wilderneſs; the ſame of all the reſt.*

This we may admit in it's full force; but as the miracles which Chriſt wrought were altogether as *neceſſary* for the proof of his divine miſſion, as theſe of Moſes for the proof of his; a man muſt be very partial to his own nation, who will aſſert, that the deliverance of the Jews from their captivity in Egypt, was a more important object than the redemption of loſt mankind. We will not doubt but it was *neceſſary* the Egyptian hoſt ſhould be drowned, becauſe it ſeemed good to God ſo to puniſh their obduracy, and extricate the Jewiſh tribes; but it is

no leſs *neceſſary*, that mankind ſhould believe in Chriſt, if they are to be ſaved through his means, and for the confirmation of that *neceſſary* faith, theſe miracles were performed: The author of the objection, who himſelf aſſerts that Moſes delivered the important doctrine of a future ſtate, will not deny that the belief of a future ſtate is a *neceſſary* belief; and if it be ſo, it muſt follow that Chriſt's reſurrection and appearance upon earth after his crucifixion, (a miracle I preſume as great and ſtriking as any wrought by the hand of Moſes) was as pertinent to that general end, as the wonders in the land of Egypt and at the Red Sea were to the particular purpoſe of reſcuing the Jews out of their captivity.

If we grant that Moſes, as this objector intimates, did impart the doctrine of a future ſtate, Chriſt did more by exemplifying it in his own perſon, and againſt ſuch evidence we might preſume even a Sadducee would not hold out. Now as ſo large a portion of the Jewiſh nation were ſtill in the avowed diſbelief of that doctrine, which our opponent believes was taught them by their great prophet and lawgiver himſelf, ſurely

ſurely he muſt of force allow, that the reſurrection of Chriſt was to them at leaſt, and to all who like them did not credit the doctrine of a life to come, a *neceſſary* miracle.

Where ſuch a teacher as Moſes had failed to perſuade, what leſs than a miracle could conquer their infidelity? Unleſs indeed, our author ſhall join iſſue with Abraham in his reply to Dives, as recorded in the words of Chriſt, and maintain with him, that as they would not believe the word of Moſes, *neither would they be perſuaded, though one actually roſe from the dead.*

And now I will more cloſely animadvert upon the bold aſſertion of *David Levi*, the Jew, (whoſe hoſtile opinions we tolerate) that the miracles of Chriſt, the Savior of the world (whoſe religion we profeſs) were *ſcarcely juſt or rational.*

Our faith is at iſſue; our eſtabliſhed church falls to the ground, our very ſovereign becomes no longer the *defender of our faith*, but rather the defender of our folly, if this contemner of Chriſt, this alien, who aſſaults our religion, whilſt he is living under the protection of our laws, ſhall, with one

one ſtroke of an audacious pen, undermine the ſtrong foundation of our belief.

Let us hear how this modern caviller confutes thoſe miracles, which his forefathers ſaw and did not dare to deny.

He takes two out of the number, and if there is any merit in the ſelection, he is beholden to his correſpondent for it: Theſe are, firſt, *the driving the devils out of the man poſſeſſed, and ſending them into the herd of ſwine*; *Mat. viii.* 28. Secondly, *the curſe pronounced upon the barren fig-tree*; *Mark xi.* 13.

Upon the firſt of theſe he has the following ſtricture—*This I think was not ſtrictly juſt, for as according to your* [Dr. Prieſtley's] *opinion, he was but a man and a prophet, I would willingly be informed what right he had to deſtroy another man's property in the manner he did by ſending the devils into them, and ſo cauſing them to run violently into the ſea and periſh?*

This miracle is recorded alſo by Saint Mark, v. 1. and again by Saint Luke, viii. 26. What Saint Matthew calls the country of the Gergeſenes, the other two evangeliſts calls the country of the Gadarenes, and

and St. Luke adds that it is over againſt Galilee; this country, as I conceive, was within the boundaries of the half tribe of Manaſſeh, on the other ſide of Jordan, and is by Strabo called *Gadarida*, lib. 16. Now Moſes both in Leviticus xi. and Deuteronomy xiv. prohibits ſwine, as one of the unclean beaſts: *Of their fleſh ſhall ye not eat, and their carcaſe ſhall ye not touch; they are unclean to you.* Iſaiah alſo ſtates it as a particular ſin and abomination in the Jews, whom he calleth a *rebellious people, a people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; which remain among the graves and lodge in the monuments, which eat ſwine's fleſh, lxv.* 2, 3, 4. And again, *They that ſanctify themſelves and purify themſelves in the gardens, behind one tree in the midſt, eating ſwine's fleſh, &c. ſhall be conſumed together, ſaith the Lord. lxvi.* 17. Eleazar the ſcribe, *when conſtrained to open his mouth and eat ſwine's fleſh, choſe rather to die glorioufly, than to live ſtained with ſuch an abomination.* 2 *Macc. vi.* 18. 19. The ſeven brethren alſo, who were compelled to the like abomination, declared, *They were ready to die rather than to tranſgreſs the laws of their fathers.* This being the law of Moſes

Moſes with reſpect to this proſcribed animal, and ſuch being the corruptions of the people in violating that law, I am at a loſs to diſcover the *injuſtice* of the miracle; ſeeing what abominations theſe creatures had occaſioned amongſt the Jews, ſo as to draw down the denunciations of the prophet Iſaiah, repeatedly urged in the paſſages above quoted; and it is with particular ſurprize I meet the charge from one, who is himſelf a Jew, and who, I muſt preſume, would die the death of Eleazar rather than be defiled with ſuch abominable food. It would be hard indeed if Chriſt, whom he arraigns for aboliſhing the Moſaical diſpenſation in one part of his argument, ſhould in another be accuſed of wrong and injury for conforming to it: But any wretched ſhift ſhall be reſorted to for matter of railing againſt Chriſt, and rather than not feed his ſpleen at all, he will feed it upon ſwine's fleſh: Let the learned Jew firſt prove to me that a hog was not an abomination to his countrymen, and it will then be time enough to debate upon the *injuſtice* of deſtroying them; meanwhile I ſhall not be diſpoſed to allow of any damages for the

ſwine

ſwine in queſtion at the ſuit and proſecution of a Jew.

His ſecond attack is pointed againſt the miracle of the fig-tree, which was blaſted at the word of Chriſt.

Though Saint Matthew as well as Saint Mark, records this miracle, yet, for reaſons ſufficiently obvious, he refers to the latter, who ſays, *that when Chriſt came to it he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.* His argument upon this paſſage is as follows: *Hence it is manifeſt, that he required the tree to produce fruit out of ſeaſon, and which would have been contrary to the intent of it's creator; and therefore he, as a dutiful ſon, curſes the innocent and guiltleſs tree for doing that, which his father had commanded it to do, viz. to bear fruit in it's proper ſeaſon:* In this paragraph our Jew has quickened his argument with ſome facetious irony, and he follows it with an air of exultation as well as inſult: *If, after this, Chriſtians ſhould ſtill perſiſt in the miracle, according to the letter of the ſtory, much good may it do them; but I am ſure it will never be the means of converting the unbelieving Jews to the Chriſtian faith.*

I cloſe

I close with him in opinion that this miracle will not be the means of converting his unbelieving brethren to Christianity; for how can I hope, that what their fathers saw and yet believed not, should at this distant period gain belief from their posterity? I also join with him in saying (and I suspect I say it with somewhat more sincerity) *much good may it do* to all those Christians, who persist in their belief of it! A descendant of those who murdered Christ, may act in character, when he insults his miracles and ridicules his person, but a believer in Christ will be an imitator of his patience.

It is now time to dismiss the irony and apply to the argument. This simply turns upon Saint Mark's interjectional observation, not noticed by Saint Matthew in his account, viz. *that the time of figs was not yet:* He says, that Jesus being hungry saw a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, and came if haply he might find any thing thereon: By this it appears that the tree was in leaf, and Jesus approached it with the expectation of finding something thereon; but when he found nothing but leaves, he said unto

unto it, *No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever!* And his diſciples heard it: Theſe came again the next morning, and paſſing by the fig-tree ſaw it dried up from the roots; which when Peter remarked as a completion of the miracle, Jeſus ſaid to them all, HAVE FAITH IN GOD!

In theſe important words we have the moral of the act. The tree, which this reviler takes upon himſelf to ſay, was *commanded* by God *to bear fruit in it's proper ſeaſon*, was on the contrary commanded by God to bear fruit no more, but ſerve a nobler purpoſe by witneſſing to the miraculous power of Chriſt; and now if *an innocent and guiltleſs tree* was blaſted out of ſeaſon by the word of Chriſt for the purpoſe of inſpiring the beholders with *Faith in God*, the benefit conferred upon human nature may well atone for the injury done to vegetable nature; though I am free to acknowledge to it's pathetic advocate, that, as a Jew, he has undertaken a more cleanly cauſe, than when he before ſtood forth in defence of the hogs: As well may he bewail *the innocent and guiltleſs trees* and grain of Egypt, which were ſmitten by the hail, when

when Moſes called it down upon the land, if ſuch be his tender feelings toward the productions of the earth, as this ſingle fig-tree: Till he can convince us that the deliverance of the Jews from their Egyptian bondage was a more important object than the redemption of the world, he will find it hard to make a reaſoning man allow, that this ſingle fig-tree, even though it had no right to bear fruit, hath a ſtronger appeal to juſtice againſt the miracle of Chriſt, than *every herb of the field that was ſmitten*, *every* guiltleſs and innocent *tree of the field that was broken* by the ſtretching forth of the rod of Moſes.

Thus then ſtands the account between Chriſt and his accuſer; the Jewiſh nation loſt a tree, and mankind gained—a Savior!

No. LXVI.

IF it were neceſſary to enter into a more literal defence of the miracle of the blaſted fig-tree, I ſee no abſolute reaſon to conclude with the caviller, that Chriſt required the

the tree to produce fruit out of ſeaſon and act againſt it's nature; for *if the time of figs* be the gathering or harveſt of figs, it was more reaſonable to expect fruit from this tree before the time of plucking, than after it; and as this fruit was no ſmall article in the produce and traffick of Judæa, we may well conclude *the time of figs*, mentioned by Saint Mark, was like the vintage in the wine countries; and I apprehend it would not be an unreaſonable expectation to find a cluſter of grapes on a vine, before the time of vintage was come. This conſtruction of the words will ſeem the more reaſonable, when we remark that Saint Matthew, who records the miracle, takes no account of this circumſtance, and that Saint Mark, who ſtates it, ſtates alſo that Chriſt in his hunger applied to the tree, *if haply he might find any thing thereon*, which implies expectation.

But our Jew hath ſuggeſted a better method of performing the miracle, by commanding fruit from a withered tree inſtead of blaſting a living one; which, ſays he, *if Jeſus had done, it would have been ſuch an inſtance of his power, as to have rendered the proof of the miracle indiſputable.*

Here

Here let him ſtand to his confeſſion, and I take him at his word: I agree with him in owing that the miracle, as he ſtates it, would have been indiſputable, had Chriſt given life and fruit to a withered tree; and I demand of him to agree with me, that the miracle was indiſputable, when the ſame Chriſt gave breath and life to dead Lazarus.

But alas! I can hardly expect that the raiſing a dead tree to life would have been thus ſucceſsful, though even infidelity aſſerts it, when the miracle of reſtoring a dead man to life hath not ſilenced his cavils, but left him to quibble about hogs and figs, and even in the face of his own confeſſion to arraign the Savior of the world as *unjuſt and irrational* through the channel of a Chriſtian preſs: Neither am I bound to admit, that his correction of the miracle would in any reſpect have amended it; for, as an inſtance of Chriſt's miraculous power, I I can ſee no greater energy in the act of enlivening a dead tree, than in deſtroying a living one by the ſingle word of his command.

I muſt yet aſk patience of the reader,

whilſt I attend upon this objector to another cavil ſtarted againſt this miracle of the fig-tree, in the account of which he ſays there is a contradiction of dates between Saint Matthew and Saint Mark, for that in the former it appears *Chriſt firſt caſt the buyers and ſellers out of the temple, and on the morrow curſed the fig-tree; whereas according to Saint Mark it was tranſacted before the driving them out of the temple, and ſuch a manifeſt contradiction muſt greatly affect the credibility of the hiſtory.*

Whether or not a day's diſagreement in the dates would ſo *greatly affect the credibility of the hiſtory* we are not called upon to argue, becauſe it will be found that no ſuch contradiction exiſts.

Saint Mark agrees with Saint Matthew in ſaying, that *Jeſus entered into Jeruſalem and into the temple*, and on the morrow curſed the fig-tree; he then adds that he returned to Jeruſalem, and drove the buyers and ſellers out of the temple: Again, the next morning he and his diſciples paſſed by the fig-tree and ſaw it dried up from the roots: This is told in detail.

Saint Matthew agrees with Saint Mark in ſaying

ſaying Jeſus went into the temple the day before he deſtroyed the fig-tree, but he does not break the narrative into detail, as Saint Mark does; for as he relates the whole miracle of the fig-tree at once, compriſing the events of two days in one account, ſo doth he give the whole of what paſſed in the temple at once alſo.

Both Evangeliſts agree in making Chriſt's entrance into the temple antecedent to his miracle; but Saint Matthew with more brevity puts the whole of each incident into one account, Saint Mark more circumſtantially details every particular: And this is the mighty contradiction, which David Levi hath diſcovered in the ſacred hiſtorians, upon which he exultingly pronounces, that *he is confident there are a number of others as glaring as this; but which he has not at preſent either time or inclination to point out.*

Theſe menaces I ſhall expect he will make good, for when his time ſerves to point them out, I dare believe his inclination will not ſtand in the way.

In the meantime let it be remembered, that David Levi ſtands pledged as the author of an unſupported charge againſt the veracity

veracity of the Evangeliſts, and let every faithful Chriſtian, to whom thoſe holy records are dear, but moſt of all the proper guardians of our church, be prepared to meet their opponent and his charge.

But our caviller hath not yet done with the Evangeliſts, for he aſſerts that *they are not only contradictory to each other, but are inconſiſtent with themſelves; for what can be more ſo than Matthew* i. 18. *with Matthew* xiii. 55.?

Now mark the contradiction! *The birth of Jeſus was on this wiſe; When as his mother Mary was eſpouſed to Joſeph, before they came together, ſhe was found with child of the Holy Ghoſt, Chap.* i. 18. The other text is found in *Chap.* xiii. 55: *Is not this the carpenter's ſon? is not his mother Mary? and his brethren James and Joſes and Simon and Judas?*

Need any child be told, that in the firſt text Saint Matthew ſpeaks, and in the ſecond the cavilling Jews? who then can wonder if they diſagree? as well we might expect agreement between truth and falſehood, between the Evangeliſt and *David Levi*, as between two paſſages of ſuch oppoſite cha-

racters. Is this the man, who is to confute the holy ſcriptures? Weak champion of an unworthy cauſe!

What he means by an inconſiſtency between *Luke* i. 34, 35. and *Luke* xiv. 22. I cannot underſtand, and conclude there muſt be an error of the preſs, of which I think no author can have leſs reaſon to complain than *David Levi.*

Theſe two unproſperous attacks being the whole of what he attempts upon the inconſiſtency of the ſacred hiſtorians with themſelves, I ſhall no longer detain my readers, than whilſt I notice one more cavil, which this author points againſt the divine miſſion of Chriſt, as compared with that of Moſes, viz. *That God ſpeaking with Moſes face to face in the preſence of ſix hundred thouſand men, beſides women and children, as mentioned in Exod.* xix. 9. *was ſuch an eſſential proof of the divine miſſion of Moſes, as is wanting on the part of Jeſus*; and therefore he concludes, that taking the miracles of Moſes and this colloquy with the Supreme Being together, the evidences for him are much ſtronger than for Chriſt.

A man, who does not inſtantly diſcern the futility

futility of this argument, muſt forget all the ſeveral incidents in the hiſtory of Chriſt, where the voice of God audibly teſtifies to his divine miſſion; for inſtance *Matth.* iii. 16, 17. *And Jeſus, when he was baptized, went up ſtraitway out of the water, and lo! the heavens were opened unto him, and he ſaw the Spirit of God deſcending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo! a voice from heaven, ſaying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.* The ſame is repeated by *Mark*, i. 10, 11.; again by *Luke*, iii. 21, 22.; again by *John*, i. 32, 33, 34.

If theſe ſupernatural ſigns and declarations do not evince the ſuperiority of Chriſt's miſſion above that of Moſes; if Chriſt, to whom angels miniſtered, when the devil in deſpair departed from him, Chriſt, who was transfigured before his diſciples, *and his face did ſhine as the ſun, and his raiment was white as the light, and behold! there appeared unto them Moſes and Elias talking with him*; Chriſt, at whoſe death *the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and*

many bodies of ſaints, which ſlept, aroſe, and came out of the graves after his reſurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many; in concluſion, if Chriſt, whoſe reſurrection was declared by angels, ſeen and acknowledged by many witneſſes, and whoſe aſcenſion into heaven crowned and completed the irrefragable evidence of his divine miſſion; if Chriſt, whoſe prophecies of his own death and reſurrection, of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem and the ſubſequent diſperſion of the Jews, have been and are now ſo fully verified, cannot, as our caviller aſſerts, meet the compariſon with Moſes, then is the Redeemer of loſt mankind a leſs ſublime and important character than the legiſlator of the Jews.

I have now attempted in the firſt place to diſcover how far the world was illuminated by right reaſon before the revelation of Chriſt took place; for had men's belief been ſuch, and their practice alſo ſuch as Chriſtianity teaches, the world had not ſtood in need of a Redeemer.

The reſult of this enquiry was, that certain perſons have expreſſed themſelves well and juſtly upon the ſubject of God and religion

gion in times antecedent to the Chriſtian æra, and in countries where idolatry was the eſtabliſhed worſhip:

That the nation of the Jews was a peculiar nation, and preſerved the worſhip of the true and only God, revealed in very early time to their fathers, but that this worſhip from various circumſtances and events, in which they themſelves were highly criminal, had not been propagated beyond the limits of a ſmall tract, and that the temple of Jeruſalem was the only church in the world, where God was worſhipped, when Chriſt came upon earth:

That from the almoſt univerſal diffuſion of idolatry, from the unworthy ideas men had of God and religion, and the few faint notions entertained amongſt them of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, the world was in ſuch deplorable error, and in ſuch univerſal need of an inſtructor and redeemer, that the coming of Chriſt was moſt ſeaſonable and neceſſary to ſalvation:

That there were a number of concurrent prophecies of an authentic character in actual exiſtence, which promiſed this ſalvation to the world, and depicted the perſon of the

many bodies of ſaints, which ſlept, aroſe, and came out of the graves after his reſurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many; in concluſion, if Chriſt, whoſe reſurrection was declared by angels, ſeen and acknowledged by many witneſſes, and whoſe aſcenſion into heaven crowned and completed the irrefragable evidence of his divine miſſion; if Chriſt, whoſe prophecies of his own death and reſurrection, of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem and the ſubſequent diſperſion of the Jews, have been and are now ſo fully verified, cannot, as our caviller aſſerts, meet the compariſon with Moſes, then is the Redeemer of loſt mankind a leſs ſublime and important character than the legiſlator of the Jews.

I have now attempted in the firſt place to diſcover how far the world was illuminated by right reaſon before the revelation of Chriſt took place; for had men's belief been ſuch, and their practice alſo ſuch as Chriſtianity teaches, the world had not ſtood in need of a Redeemer.

The reſult of this enquiry was, that certain perſons have expreſſed themſelves well and juſtly upon the ſubject of God and religion

gion in times antecedent to the Chriſtian æra, and in countries where idolatry was the eſtabliſhed worſhip:

That the nation of the Jews was a peculiar nation, and preſerved the worſhip of the true and only God, revealed in very early time to their fathers, but that this worſhip from various circumſtances and events, in which they themſelves were highly criminal, had not been propagated beyond the limits of a ſmall tract, and that the temple of Jeruſalem was the only church in the world, where God was worſhipped, when Chriſt came upon earth:

That from the almoſt univerſal diffuſion of idolatry, from the unworthy ideas men had of God and religion, and the few faint notions entertained amongſt them of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, the world was in ſuch deplorable error, and in ſuch univerſal need of an inſtructor and redeemer, that the coming of Chriſt was moſt ſeaſonable and neceſſary to ſalvation:

That there were a number of concurrent prophecies of an authentic character in actual exiſtence, which promiſed this ſalvation to the world, and depicted the perſon of the

Meſſias, who was to perform this mediatorial office in ſo ſtriking a manner, that it cannot be doubted but that all thoſe characteriſtics meet and are fulfilled in the perſon of Chriſt:

That his birth, doctrines, miracles, prophecies, death and paſſion, with other evidences, are ſo ſatisfactory for the confirmation of our belief in his divine miſſion, that our faith as Chriſtians is grounded upon irrefragable proofs:

Laſtly, That the vague opinions of our own diſſenting brethren, and the futile cavils of a recent publication by a diſtinguiſhed writer of the Jewiſh nation, are ſuch weak and impotent aſſaults upon our religion, as only ſerve to confirm us in it the more.

If I have effected this to the ſatisfaction of the ſerious reader I ſhall be moſt happy, and as for thoſe who ſeek nothing better than amuſement in theſe volumes, I will apply myſelf without delay to the eaſier taſk of furniſhing them with matter more ſuited to their taſte.

No. LXVII.

Muſa dedit fidibus Divos, pueroſque Deorum,
Et pugilem victorem, et equum certamine primum,
Et juvenum curas, et libera vina referre.
(HORAT.)

IN times of very remote antiquity, when men were not ſo laviſh of their wit as they have ſince been, Poetry could not furniſh employment for more than *Three Muſes*; but as buſineſs grew upon their hands and departments multiplied, it became neceſſary to enlarge the commiſſion, and a board was conſtituted conſiſting of *Nine* in number, who had their ſeveral preſidencies allotted to them, and every branch of the art poetic thenceforth had its peculiar patroneſs and ſuperintendant.

As to the ſpecific time when theſe three ſenior goddeſſes called in their ſix new aſſeſſors it is matter of conjecture only; but if the poet *Heſiod* was, as we are told, the firſt who had the honour of announcing their names and characters to the world, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe this was done

upon the immediate opening of their new commiſſion, as they would hardly enter upon their offices without appriſing all thoſe, whom it might concern, of their acceſſion.

Before this period the three eldeſt ſiſters condeſcended to be *maids of all work*; and if the work became more than they could turn their hands to, they have nobody but themſelves and their fellow deities to complain of; for had they been content to have let the world go on in its natural courſe, mere mortal poets would not probably have overburthened either it or them; but when Apollo himſelf (who being their preſident ſhould have had more conſideration for their eaſe) begot the poet *Linus* in one of his terreſtrial frolics, and endowed him with hereditary genius, he took a certain method to make work for the muſes: Accordingly we find the chaſte Calliope herſelf, the eldeſt of the ſiſterhood, and who ſhould have ſet a better example to the family, could not hold out againſt this heavenly baſtard, but in an unguarded moment yielded her virgin honours to *Linus*, and produced the poet *Orpheus*: Such an inſtance of celeſtial incontinence could not fail to ſhake the morals of

the

the moſt demure; and even the cold goddeſs Luna caught the flame, and ſmuggled a bantling into the world, whom maliciouſly enough ſhe named *Muſæus*, with a ſly deſign no doubt of laying her child at the door of the Parnaſſian nunnery.

Three ſuch high-blooded bards as *Linus*, *Orpheus* and *Muſæus*, ſo fathered and ſo mothered, were enough to people all Greece with poets and muſicians; and in truth they were not idle in their generation, but like true patriarchs ſpread their families over all the ſhores of Ionia and the iſlands of the Archipelago: It is not therefore to be wondered at, if the three ſiſter muſes, who had enough to do to nurſe their own children and deſcendants, were diſpoſed to call in other helpmates to the taſk, and whilſt Greece was in its glory, it may well be ſuppoſed that all the nine ſiſters were fully employed in beſtowing upon every votary a portion of their attention, and anſwering every call made upon them for aid and inſpiration: Much gratitude is due to them from their favoured poets, and much hath been paid, for even to the preſent hour they are invoked and worſhipped by the ſons of

verſe, whilſt all the other deities of Olympus have either abdicated their thrones, or been diſmiſſed from them with contempt; even Milton himſelf in his ſacred epic invokes the *heavenly muſe*, who inſpired Moſes *on the top of Horeb or of Sinai*; by which he aſcribes great antiquity as well as dignity to the character he addreſſes.

The powers aſcribed to *Orpheus* were under the veil of fable emblems of his influence over ſavage minds, and of his wiſdom and eloquence in reclaiming them from that barbarous ſtate: Upon theſe impreſſions civilization and ſociety took place: The patriarch, who founded a family or tribe, the legiſlator, who eſtabliſhed a ſtate, the prieſt, prophet, judge or king, are characters, which, if traced to their firſt ſources, will be found to branch from that of poet: The firſt prayers, the firſt laws, and the earlieſt prophecies were metrical; proſe hath a later origin, and before the art of writing was in exiſtence, poetry had reached a very high degree of excellence, and ſome of it's nobleſt productions were no otherwiſe preſerved than by tradition. As to the ſacred quality of their firſt poetry the Greeks are agreed,

and

and to give their early bards the better title to inſpiration, they feign them to be deſcended from the Gods; *Orpheus* muſt have profited by his mother's partiality, and *Linus* may well be ſuppoſed to have had ſome intereſt with his father Apollo. But to dwell no longer on theſe fabulous legends of the Greeks, we may refer to the books of Moſes for the earlieſt and moſt authentic examples of ſacred poetry: Every thing that was the immediate effuſion of the prophetic ſpirit ſeems to have been chaunted forth in dithyrambic meaſure; the valedictory bleſſings of the Patriarchs, when dying, the ſongs of triumph and thankſgiving after victory are metrical, and high as the antiquity of the ſacred poem of Job undoubtedly is, ſuch nevertheleſs is its character and conſtruction, as to carry ſtrong internal marks of its being written in an advanced ſtate of the art.

The poet therefore, whether Hebrew or Greek, was in the earlieſt ages a ſacred character, and his talent a divine gift, a celeſtial inſpiration: Men regarded him as the ambaſſador of Heaven and the interpreter of it's will. It is perfectly in nature, and no

leſs agreeable to God's providence, to ſuppoſe that even in the darkeſt times ſome minds of a more enlightened ſort ſhould break forth, and be engaged in the contemplation of the univerſe and it's author: From meditating upon the works of the Creator, the tranſition to the act of praiſe and adoration follows as it were of courſe: Theſe are operations of the mind, which naturally inſpire it with a certain portion of rapture and enthuſiaſm, ruſhing upon the lips in warm and glowing language, and diſdaining to be expreſſed in ordinary and vulgar phraſe; the thoughts become inflated, the breaſt labours with a paſſionate deſire to ſay ſomething worthy of the ear of Heaven, ſomething in a more elevated tone and cadence, ſomething more harmonious and muſical; this can only be effected by meaſured periods, by ſome chaunt, that can be repeated in the ſtrain again and again, grateful at once to the ear and impreſſive on the memory; and what is this but poetry? Poetry then is the language of prayer, an addreſs becoming of the Deity; it may be remembered; it may be repeated in the ears of the people called together for the purpoſes of worſhip;

worſhip; this is a form that may be fixt upon their minds, and in this they may be taught to join.

The next ſtep in the progreſs of poetry from the praiſe of God is to the praiſe of men: Illuſtrious characters, heroic actions are ſingled out for celebration; the inventors of uſeful arts, the reformers of ſavage countries, the benefactors of mankind, are extolled in verſe, they are raiſed to the ſkies, and the poet, having praiſed them as the firſt of men, whilſt on earth, deifies them after death, and, conſcious that they merit immortality, boldly beſtows it, and aſſigns to them a rank and office in heaven appropriate to the character they maintained in life; hence it is that the merits of a Bacchus, a Hercules, and numbers more are amplified by the poet, till they become the attributes of their divinity, altars are raiſed and victims immolated to their worſhip. Theſe are the fanciful effects of poetry in its ſecond ſtage: Religion over-heated turns into enthuſiaſm; enthuſiaſm forces the imagination into all the viſionary regions of fable, and idolatry takes poſſeſſion of the whole Gentile world. The Egyptians, a myſterious

myſterious dogmatizing race, begin the work with ſymbol and hieroglyphic; the Greeks, a vain ingenious people, invent a ſet of tales and fables for what they do not underſtand, embelliſh them with all the glittering ornaments of poetry, and ſpread the captivating deluſion over all the world.

In the ſucceeding period we review the poet in full poſſeſſion of this brilliant machinery, and with all Olympus at his command: Surrounded by Apollo and the muſes, he commences every poem with an addreſs to them for protection: He has a deity at his call for every operation of nature; if he would roll the thunder, Jupiter ſhakes Mount Ida to dignify his deſcription; Neptune attends him in his car, if he would allay the ocean; if he would let looſe the winds to raiſe it Æolus unbars his cave; the ſpear of Mars and the ægis of Minerva arm him for the battle; the arrows of Apollo ſcatter peſtilence through the air; Mercury flies upon the meſſages of Jupiter; Juno raves with jealouſy, and Venus leads the Loves and Graces in her train. In this claſs we contemplate *Homer* and his inferior brethren of the epic order; it is their province

vince to form the warrior, inſtruct the politician, animate the patriot; they delineate the characters and manners; they charm us with their deſcriptions, ſurprize us with their incidents, intereſt us with their dialogue; they engage every paſſion in its turn, melt us to pity, rouſe us to glory, ſtrike us with terror, fire us with indignation; in a word they prepare us for the drama, and the drama for us.

A new poet now comes upon the ſtage; he ſtands in perſon before us: He no longer appears as a blind and wandering bard, chaunting his rhapſodies to a throng of villagers collected in a group about him, but erects a ſplendid theatre, gathers together a whole city as his audience, prepares a ſtriking ſpectacle, provides a chorus of actors, brings muſic, dance and dreſs to his aid, realizes the thunder, burſts open the tombs of the dead, calls forth their apparitions, deſcends to the very regions of the damned, and drags the Furies from their flames to preſent themſelves perſonally to the terrified ſpectators: Such are the powers of the drama; here the poet reigns and triumphs in his higheſt glory.

§ The

The fifth denomination gives us the lyric poet chaunting his ode at the public games and feſtivals, crowned with olive and encompaſſed by all the wits and nobles of his age and country: Here we contemplate *Steſichorus*, *Alcæus*, *Pindar*, *Calliſtratus*; ſublime, abrupt, impetuous, they ſtrike us with the ſhock of their electric genius; they dart from earth to heaven; there is no following them in their flights; we ſtand gazing with ſurprize, their boldneſs awes us, their brevity confounds us; their ſudden tranſitions and ellipſes eſcape our apprehenſion; we are charmed we know not why, we are pleaſed with being puzzled, and applaud although we cannot comprehend. In the lighter lyric we meet *Anacreon*, *Sappho*, and the votaries of Bacchus and Venus; in the grave, didactic, ſolemn claſs we have the venerable names of a *Solon*, a *Tyrtæus*, and thoſe, who may be ſtiled the demagogues in poetry: Is liberty to be aſſerted, licentiouſneſs to be repreſſed? Is the ſpirit of a nation to be rouſed? It is the poet not the orator muſt give the ſoul it's energy and ſpring: Is Salamis to be recovered? It is the elegy of *Solon* muſt ſound the march to it's

it's attack. Are the Lacedemonians to be awakened from their lethargy? It is *Tyrtæus*, who muſt ſing the war-ſong and revive their languid courage.

Poetry next appears in its paſtoral character; it affects the garb of ſhepherds and the language of the ruſtic: It repreſents to our view the rural landſcape and the peaceful cottage; it records the labours, the amuſements, the loves of the village nymphs and ſwains, and exhibits nature in its ſimpleſt ſtate: It is no longer the harp or the lyre, but the pipe of the poet, which now invites our attention: *Theocritus*, leaning on his crook in his ruſſet mantle and *clouted brogues*, appears more perfectly in character than the courtly *Maro*, who ſeems more the ſhepherd of the theatre than of the field. I have yet one other claſs in reſerve for the epigrammatiſt, but I will ſhut up my liſt without him, not being willing that poetry, which commences with a prayer, ſhould conclude with a pun.

No. LXVIII.

TASTE may be conſidered either as ſenſitive or mental; and under each of theſe denominations is ſometimes ſpoken of as natural, ſometimes as acquired; I propoſe to treat of it in it's intellectual conſtruction only, and in this ſenſe Mr. Addiſon defines it to be *that faculty of the ſoul, which diſcerns the beauties of an author with pleaſure, and the imperfections with diſlike.*

This definition may very properly apply to the faculty which we exerciſe in judging and deciding upon the works of others; but how does it apply to the faculty exerciſed by thoſe who produced thoſe works? How does it ſerve to develope the taſte of an author, the taſte of a painter or a ſtatuary? and yet we may ſpeak of a *work* of taſte with the ſame propriety, as we do of a *man* of taſte. It ſhould ſeem therefore as if this definition went only to that denomination of taſte, which we properly call an *acquired* taſte; the productions of which generally end in imitation, whilſt thoſe of *natural* taſte bear the ſtamp of originality: Another charac-

characteriſtic of natural taſte will be ſimplicity; for how can nature give more than ſhe poſſeſſes, and what is nature but ſimplicity? Now when the mind of any man is endued with a fine natural taſte, and all means of profiting by other men's ideas are out of the queſtion, that taſte will operate by diſpoſing him to ſelect the faireſt ſubjects out of what he ſees either for art or imagination to work upon: Still his production will be marked with ſimplicity; but as it is the province of taſte to ſeparate deformity or vulgarity from what is merely ſimple, ſo according to the nature of his mind who poſſeſſes it, beauty or ſublimity will be the reſult of the operation: If his taſte inclines him to what is fair and elegant in nature, he will produce beauty; if to what is lofty, bold and tremendous, he will ſtrike out ſublimity.

Agreeably to this, we may obſerve in all literary and enlightened nations, their earlieſt authors and artiſts are the moſt ſimple: Firſt, adventurers repreſent what they ſee or conceive with ſimplicity, becauſe their impulſe is unbiaſſed by emulation, having nothing in their ſight either to imitate, avoid,

or

or excel; on the other hand their ſucceſſors are ſenſible, that one man's deſcription of nature muſt be like another's, and in their zeal to keep clear of imitation, and to outſtrip a predeceſſor, they begin to compound, refine, and even to diſtort. I will refer to the *Venus de Medicis* and the *Laöcoon* for an illuſtration of this: I do not concern myſelf about the dates or ſculptors of theſe figures; but in the former we ſee beautiful ſimplicity, the faireſt form in nature, ſelected by a fine taſte, and imitated without affectation or diſtortion, and as it ſhould ſeem without even an effort of art: In the *Laöcoon* we have a complicated plot; we unravel a maze of ingenious contrivance, where the artiſt has compounded and diſtorted Nature in the ambition of ſurpaſſing her.

Virgil poſſeſſed a fine taſte according to Mr. Addiſon's definition, which I before obſerved applies only to an *acquired taſte*: He had *the faculty of diſcerning the beauties of an author with pleaſure, and the imperfections with diſlike*: He had alſo the faculty of *imitating* what he *diſcerned*; ſo that I cannot verify what I have advanced by any ſtronger

ſtronger inſtance than his. I ſhould think there does not exiſt a poet, who has gone ſuch lengths in imitation as Virgil; for to paſs over his paſtoral and bucolic poems, which are evidently drawn from Theocritus and Heſiod, with the aſſiſtance of Aratus in every thing that relates to the ſcientific part of the ſigns and ſeaſons, it is ſuppoſed that his whole narrative of the deſtruction of Troy, with the incident of the wooden horſe and the epiſode of Sinon, are an almoſt literal tranſlation of Piſander the epic poet, who in his turn perhaps might copy his account from the Ilias Minor; (but this laſt is mere ſuggeſtion). As for the Æneid, it does little elſe but reverſe the order of Homer's epic, making Æneas's voyage precede his wars in Italy, whereas the voyage of Ulyſſes is ſubſequent to the operations of the Iliad. As Apollo is made hoſtile to the Greeks, and the cauſe of his offence is introduced by Homer in the opening of the Iliad, ſo Juno in the Æneid ſtands in his place with every circumſtance of imitation. It would be an endleſs taſk to trace the various inſtances throughout the

Æneid,

Æneid, where ſcarce a ſingle incident can be found which is not copied from Homer: Neither is there greater originality in the executive parts of the poem, than in the conſtructive; with this difference only, that he has copied paſſages from various authors, Roman as well as Greek, though from Homer the moſt. Amongſt the Greeks, the dramatic poets Æſchylus, Sophocles, and principally Euripides, have had the greateſt ſhare of his attention; Ariſtophanes, Menander, and other comic authors, Callimachus and ſome of the lyric writers, alſo may be traced in his imitations. A vaſt collection of paſſages from Ennius chiefly, from Lucretius, Furius, Lucilius, Pacuvius, Suevius, Nævius, Varius, Catullus, Accius and others of his own nation, has been made by Macrobius in his *Saturnalia*, where Virgil has done little elſe but put their ſentiments into more elegant verſe; ſo that in ſtrictneſs of ſpeaking we may ſay of the Æneid, "that it is a miſcellaneous "compilation of poetical paſſages, compoſ-"ing all together an epic poem, formed "upon the model of Homer's Iliad and "Odyſſey; abounding in beautiful verſifi-

"cation,

" cation, and juſtly to be admired for the " fine *acquired taſte* of its author, but de- " void of originality either of conſtruction " or execution." Beſides its general inferiority as being a copy from Homer, it particularly falls off from its original in the conception and preſervation of character: It does not reach the ſublimity and majeſty of its model, but it has in a great degree adopted the ſimplicity, and entirely avoided the ruſticity of Homer.

Lucan and Claudian in later ages were perhaps as good verſifiers as Virgil, but far inferior to him in that fine acquired taſte, which he excelled in: They are ingenious, but not ſimple; and execute better than they contrive. A paſſage from Claudian, which I ſhall beg the reader's leave to compare with one from Virgil (where he perſonifies the evil paſſions and plagues of mankind, and poſts them at the entrance of hell, to which Æneas is deſcending) will exemplify what I have ſaid; for at the ſame time that it will bear a diſpute, whether Claudian's deſcription is not even ſuperior to Virgil's in poetical merit, yet the judicious manner of introducing it in one caſe, and the evi-

dent

dent want of judgment in the other, will help to ſhew, that the reaſon why we prefer Virgil to Claudian, is more on account of his ſuperiority of taſte than of talents.

Claudian's deſcription ſtands in the very front of his poem on Ruffinus; Virgil's is woven into his fable, and will be found in the ſixth book of his Æneid, as follows:

Veſtibulum ante ipſum, primiſque in faucibus Orci,
Luctus, et ultrices poſuere cubilia Curæ;
Pallenteſque habitant Morbi, triſtiſque Senectus,
Et Metus, et maleſuada Fames, et turpis Egeſtas,
Terribiles viſu formæ; Lethumque, Laborque;
Tum conſanguineus Lethi Sopor, et mala mentis
Gaudia, mortiferumque adverſo in limine Bellum,
Ferreique Eumenidum thalami, et Diſcordia demens
Vipereum crinem vittis innexa cruentis.

(VIRGIL.)

Juſt in the gates, and in the jaws of Hell,
Revengeful Cares and ſullen Sorrows dwell,
And pale Diſeaſes, and repining Age;
Want, Fear, and Famine's unreſiſted rage;
Here Toils, and Death, and Death's half-brother, Sleep,
Forms terrible to view, their centry keep:
With anxious Pleaſures of a guilty mind,
Deep Frauds before, and open Force behind:
The Furies iron beds, and Strife that ſhakes
Her hiſſing treſſes, and unfolds her ſnakes.

(DRYDEN.)

Protinus

Protinus infernas ad limina tetra ſorores
Concilium deforme vocat; glomerantur in unum
Innumeræ peſtes Erebi, quaſcunque ſiniſtro
Nox genuit fœtu: Nutrix Diſcordia belli;
Imperioſa Fames; leto vicina Senectus;
Impatienſque ſui Morbus; Livorque ſecundis
Anxius, eſt ſciſſo Mœrens velamine Luctus,
Et Timor, et cæco præceps Audacia vultu;
Et luxus populator opum; cui ſemper adhærens
Infelix humili greſſu comitatur Egeſtas;
Fœdaque Avaritiæ complexæ pectora matris
Inſomnes longo veniunt examine Curæ.

(CLAUDIAN.)

" The infernal council, at Alecto's call
" Conven'd, aſſemble in the Stygian hall;
" Myriads of ghaſtly plagues, that ſhun the light,
" Daughters of Erebus and gloomy Night:
" Strife war-compelling; Famine's waſting rage;
" And Death juſt hovering o'er decrepid Age;
" Envy, Proſperity's repining foe,
" Reſtleſs Diſeaſe, and ſelf-diſhevell'd Woe,
" Raſhneſs, and Fear, and Poverty, that ſteals
" Cloſe as his ſhadow at the Spendthrift's heels;
" And Cares, that clinging to the Miſer's breaſt,
" Forbid his ſordid ſoul to taſte of reſt."

The productions of the human genius will borrow their complexion from the times in which they originate. Ben Jonſon ſays, that *the players often mentioned it as an honour to Shakeſpear, that in his writing (whatſoever*

he penned) he never blotted out a line. My anſwer hath been (adds he) *Would he had blotted out a thouſand! which they thought a malevolent ſpeech. I had not told poſterity this, but for their ignorance, who choſe that circumſtance to commend their friend by, wherein he moſt faulted; and to juſtify mine own candour, for I loved the man, and do honour his memory on this ſide idolatry as much as any: He was indeed honeſt, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent phantaſie, brave notions and gentle expreſſions, wherein he flowed with that facility, that ſometime it was neceſſary he ſhould be ſtopped*; Sufflaminandus erat, *as Auguſtus ſaid of Haterius: His wit was in his own power; would the rule of it had been ſo too!*

I think there can be no doubt but this kind of indignant negligence with which Shakeſpear wrote, was greatly owing to the ſlight conſideration he had for his audience. Jonſon treated them with the dictatorial haughtineſs of a pedant; Shakeſpear with the careleſſneſs of a gentleman who wrote at his eaſe, and gave them the firſt flowings of his fancy without any dread of their correction. Theſe were times in which the poet indulged

dulged his genius without reſtraint; he ſtood alone and ſuper-eminent, and wanted no artificial ſcaffold to raiſe him above the heads of his contemporaries; he was natural, lofty, careleſs, and daringly incorrect. Place the ſame man in other times, amongſt a people poliſhed almoſt into general equality, and he ſhall begin to heſitate and retract his ſallies; for in this reſpect poetical are like military excurſions, and it makes a wide difference in the movements of a ſkilful general, whether he is to ſally into a country defended by well-diſciplined troops, or only by an irregular mob of unarmed barbarians. Shakeſpear might vault his Pegaſus without a rein; mountains might riſe and ſeas roll in vain before him; Nature herſelf could neither ſtop nor circumſcribe his career. The modern man of verſe mounts with the precaution of a riding-maſter, and prances round his little circle full-bitted and capariſoned in all the formality of a review. Whilſt he is thus pacing and *piaffering* with every body's eyes upon him, his friends are calling out every now and then—"Seat "yourſelf firm in the ſaddle! Hold your "body ſtraight! Keep your ſpurs from his

" ſides for fear he ſets a kicking! Have a " care he does not ſtumble; there lies " a ſtone, here runs a ditch; keep your " whip ſtill, and depend upon your bit, if " you have not a mind to break your " neck!"—On the other quarter his enemies are bawling out—" How like a taylor that " fellow ſits on horſeback! Look at his " feet, look at his arms! Set the curs upon " him; tie a cracker to his horſe's tail, and " make ſport for the ſpectators!"—All this while perhaps the poor devil could have performed paſſably well, if it were not for the mobbing and hallooing about him: Whereas Shakeſpear mounts without fear, and ſtarting in the jockey-phraſe *at ſcore*, cries out, " Stand clear, ye ſons of earth! or, " by the beams of my father Apollo, I'll " ride over you, and trample you into " duſt!"

No. LXIX.

Nil intentatum noſtri liquere poetæ :
Nec minimum meruere decus, veſtigia Græca
Auſi deſerere, et celebrare domeſtica facta.
(HORAT.)

THERE are two very ſtriking characters delineated by our great dramatic poet, which I am deſirous of bringing together under one review, and theſe are *Macbeth* and *Richard the Third.*

The parts, which theſe two perſons ſuſtain in their reſpective dramas, have a remarkable coincidence: Both are actuated by the ſame guilty ambition in the opening of the ſtory; both murder their lawful ſovereign in the courſe of it; and both are defeated and ſlain in battle at the concluſion of it: Yet theſe two characters, under circumſtances ſo ſimilar, are as ſtrongly diſtinguiſhed in every paſſage of their dramatic life by the art of the poet, as any two men ever were by the hand of nature.

Let us contemplate them in the three following periods; viz. The premeditation of

their crime; the perpetration of it; and the cataſtrophe of their death.

Duncan the reigning king of Scotland has two ſons: Edward the fourth of England has alſo two ſons; but theſe kings and their reſpective heirs do not affect the uſurpers Macbeth and Richard in the ſame degree, for the latter is a prince of the blood royal, brother to the king, and next in conſanguinity to the throne after the death of his elder brother the Duke of Clarence: Macbeth on the contrary is not in the ſucceſſion——

And to be king
Stands not within the proſpect of belief.

His views therefore being further removed and more out of hope, a greater weight of circumſtances ſhould be thrown together to tempt and encourage him to an undertaking ſo much beyond *the proſpect of his belief.* The art of the poet furniſhes theſe circumſtances, and the engine, which his invention employs, is of a preternatural and prodigious ſort. He introduces in the very opening of his ſcene a troop of ſybils or witches, who ſalute Macbeth with their divinations, and in three ſolemn prophetic gratulations hail him *Thane*

of

of Glamis, Thane of Cawdor, and *King hereafter!*

By Sinel's death I know I'm Thane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor?

One part of the prophecy therefore is true; the remaining promiſes become more deſerving of belief. This is one ſtep in the ladder of his ambition, and mark how artfully the poet has laid it in his way: No time is loſt; the wonderful machinery is not ſuffered to ſtand ſtill, for behold a verification of the ſecond prediction, and a courtier thus addreſſes him from the king——

And for an earneſt of a greater honour,
He bade me from him call thee Thane of Cawdor.

The magic now works to his heart, and he cannot wait the departure of the royal meſſenger before his admiration vents itſelf aſide—

Glamis, and thane of Cawdor!
The greateſt is behind.

A ſecond time he turns aſide, and unable to repreſs the emotions, which this ſecond con-

firmation of the predictions has excited, repeats the ſame ſecret obſervation—

Two truths are told
As happy prologues to the ſwelling act
Of the imperial theme.

A ſoliloquy then enſues, in which the poet judiciouſly opens enough of his character to ſhew the ſpectator that theſe præternatural agents are not ſuperfluouſly ſet to work upon a diſpoſition prone to evil, but one that will have to combat many compunctious ſtruggles before it can be brought to yield even to oracular influence. This alone would demonſtrate (if we needed demonſtration) that Shakeſpear, without reſorting to the antients, had the judgment of ages as it were inſtinctively. From this inſtant we are appriſed that Macbeth meditates an attack upon our pity as well as upon our horror, when he puts the following queſtion to his conſcience—

Why do I yield to that ſuggeſtion,
Whoſe horrid image doth unfix my hair,
And make my ſeated heart knock at my ribs
Againſt the uſe of nature?

Now

Now let us turn to *Richard*, in whoſe cruel heart no ſuch remorſe finds place; he needs no tempter: There is here no *dignus vindice nodus*, nor indeed any *knot* at all, for he is already practiſed in murder: Ambition is his ruling paſſion, and a crown is in view, and he tells you at his very firſt entrance on the ſcene—

I am determined to be a villain.

We are now preſented with a character full formed and compleat for all the ſavage purpoſes of the drama:

Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer.

The barriers of conſcience are broken down, and the ſoul, hardened againſt ſhame, avows its own depravity—

Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
To ſet my brother Clarence and the king
In deadly hate the one againſt the other.

He obſerves no gradations in guilt, expreſſes no heſitation, practiſes no refinements, but plunges into blood with the familiarity of long cuſtom, and gives orders to his aſſaſſins to diſpatch his brother

Clarence with all the unfeeling tranquillity of a Nero or Caligula. Richard, having no longer any ſcruples to manage with his own conſcience, is exactly in the predicament, which the dramatic poet *Diphilus* has deſcribed with ſuch beautiful ſimplicity of expreſſion—

Οςὶς γάρ ἁυτὸς ἁυτὸν ȣ̓κ ἀισχύνεται,
Συνειδόθ' ἁυτω φαῦλα διαπεπραγμένω,
Πῶς τόν γε μηδεν ἐιδότ' ἀισχυνθήσεται·

The wretch who knows his own vile deeds, and yet fears not himſelf, how ſhould he fear another, who knows them not?

It is manifeſt therefore that there is an eſſential difference in the development of theſe characters, and that in favour of Macbeth: In his ſoul cruelty ſeems to dawn, it breaks out with faint glimmerings, like a winter-morning, and gathers ſtrength by ſlow degrees: In Richard it flames forth at once, mounting like the ſun between the tropics, and enters boldly on its career without a herald. As the character of Macbeth has a moral advantage in this diſtinction, ſo has the drama of that name a much more intereſting and affecting caſt: The

ſtruggles of a ſoul, naturally virtuous, whilſt it holds the guilty impulſe of ambition at bay, affords the nobleſt theme for the drama, and puts the creative fancy of our poet upon a reſource, in which he has been rivalled only by the great father of tragedy Æſchylus in the prophetic effuſions of Caſſandra, the incantations of the Perſian Magi for raiſing the ghoſt of Darius, and the imaginary terrific forms of his furies; with all which our countryman probably had no acquaintance, or at moſt a very obſcure one.

When I ſee the names of theſe two great luminaries of the dramatic ſphere, ſo diſtant in time but ſo nearly allied in genius, caſually brought in contact by the nature of my ſubject, I cannot help pauſing for a while in this place to indulge ſo intereſting a contemplation, in which I find my mind balanced between two objects, that ſeem to have equal claims upon me for my admiration. Æſchylus is juſtly ſtiled the father of tragedy, but this is not to be interpreted as if he was the inventor of it: Shakeſpear with equal juſtice claims the ſame title, and his originality is qualified

with the ſame exception: The Greek tragedy was not more rude and undigeſted when Æſchylus brought it into ſhape, than the Engliſh tragedy was when Shakeſpear began to write: If therefore it be granted that he had no aids from the Greek theatre (and I think this is not likely to be diſputed) ſo far theſe great maſters are upon equal ground. Æſchylus was a warrior of high repute, of a lofty generous ſpirit, and deep as it ſhould ſeem in the erudition of his times: In all theſe particulars he has great advantage over our countryman, who was humbly born, of the moſt menial occupation, and, as it is generally thought, unlearned. Æſchylus had the whole epic of Homer in his hands, the Iliad, Odyſſey, and that prolific ſource of dramatic fable, the Ilias Minor; he had alſo a great fabulous creation to reſort to amongſt his own divinities, characters ready defined, and an audience, whoſe ſuperſtition was prepared for every thing he could offer; he had therefore a firmer and broader ſtage, (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) under his feet, than Shakeſpear had: His fables in general are Homeric, and yet it does not follow that we

we can pronounce for Shakeſpear that he is more original in his plots, for I underſtand that late reſearches have traced him in all, or nearly all: Both poets added ſo much machinery and invention of their own in the conduct of their fables, that whatever might have been the ſource, ſtill their ſtreams had little or no taſte of the ſpring they flowed from. In point of character we have better grounds to decide, and yet it is but juſtice to obſerve, that it is not fair to bring a mangled poet in compariſon with one who is entire: In his divine perſonages Æſchylus has the field of heaven, and indeed of hell alſo, to himſelf; in his heroic and military characters he has never been excelled; he had too good a model within his own boſom to fail of making thoſe delineations natural: In his imaginary beings alſo he will be found a reſpectable, though not an equal, rival of our poet; but in the variety of character, in all the nicer touches of nature, in all the extravagancies of caprice and humour, from the boldeſt feature down to the minuteſt foible, Shakeſpear ſtands alone; ſuch perſons as he delineates never came into the contempla-

tion

tion of Æſchylus as a poet; his tragedy has no dealing with them; the ſimplicity of the Greek fable, and the great portion of the drama filled up by the chorus, allow of little variety of character; and the moſt which can be ſaid of Æſchylus in this particular is, that he never offends againſt nature or propriety, whether his caſt is in the terrible or pathetic, the elevated or the ſimple. His verſification with the intermixture of lyric compoſition is more various than that of Shakeſpear; both are lofty and ſublime in the extreme, abundantly metaphorical, and ſometimes extravagant:—

——*Nubes et inania captat.*

This may be ſaid of each poet in his turn; in each the critic, if he is in ſearch for defects, will readily enough diſcover—

In ſcenam miſſus magno cum pondere verſus.

Both were ſubject to be hurried on by an uncontroulable impulſe, nor could nature alone ſuffice for either: Æſchylus had an apt creation of imaginary beings at command—

He could call ſpirits from the vaſty deep,

and

and they *would come*—Shakeſpear, having no ſuch creation in reſource, boldly made one of his own; if Æſchylus therefore was invincible, he owed it to his armour, and that, like the armour of Æneas, was the work of the gods; but the unaſſiſted invention of Shakeſpear ſeized all and more than ſuperſtition ſupplied to Æſchylus.

No. LXX.

ILLE profecto
Reddere perſonæ ſcit convenientia cuique.
(HORAT.)

WE are now to attend *Macbeth* to the perpetration of the murder, which puts him in poſſeſſion of the crown of Scotland; and this introduces a new perſonage on the ſcene, his accomplice and wife: She thus developes her own character—

Come, all you ſpirits,
That tend on mortal thoughts, unſex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe topful
Of direſt cruelty; make thick my blood,

Stop

Stop up the acceſs and paſſage to remorſe,
That no compunctious viſitings of nature
Shake my fell purpoſe, nor keep peace between
Th' effect and it. Come to my woman's breaſts,
And take my milk for gall, you murth'ring miniſters,
Wherever in your ſightleſs ſubſtances
You wait on nature's miſchief: Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunneſt ſmoke of hell!

Terrible invocation! Tragedy can ſpeak no ſtronger language, nor could any genius leſs than Shakeſpear's ſupport a character of ſo lofty a pitch, ſo ſublimely terrible at the very opening.

The part which Lady Macbeth fills in the drama has a relative as well as poſitive importance, and ſerves to place the repugnance of Macbeth in the ſtrongeſt point of view; ſhe is in fact the auxiliary of the witches, and the natural influence, which ſo high and predominant a ſpirit aſſerts over the tamer qualities of her huſband, makes thoſe witches but ſecondary agents for bringing about the main action of the drama. This is well worth a remark; for if they, which are only artificial and fantaſtic inſtruments, had been made the ſole or even principal movers of the great incident of the murder, nature would have been

been excluded from her ſhare in the drama, and Macbeth would have become the mere machine of an uncontroulable neceſſity, and his character, being robbed of its free agency, would have left no moral behind: I muſt take leave therefore to anticipate a remark, which I ſhall hereafter repeat, that when lady Macbeth is urging her Lord to the murder, not a word is dropt by either of the witches or their predictions. It is in theſe inſtances of his conduct that Shakeſpear is ſo wonderful a ſtudy for the dramatic poet. But I proceed——

Lady Macbeth in her firſt ſcene, from which I have already extracted a paſſage, prepares for an attempt upon the conſcience of her huſband, whoſe nature ſhe thus deſcribes—

Yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o'th' milk of human kindneſs
To catch the neareſt way.

He arrives before ſhe quits the ſcene, and ſhe receives him with conſummate addreſs—

Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both by the All-hail hereafter!

Theſe

Theſe are the very gratulations of the witches; ſhe welcomes him with confirmed predictions, with the tempting ſalutations of ambition, not with the ſoftening careſſes of a wife—

Macb. *Duncan comes here to night.*
Lady. *And when goes hence?*
Macb. *To-morrow, as he purpoſes.*
Lady. *Oh never*
Shall ſun that morrow ſee!

The rapidity of her paſſion hurries her into immediate explanation, and he, conſiſtently with the character ſhe had deſcribed, evades her precipitate ſolicitations with a ſhort indeciſive anſwer—

We will ſpeak further——

His reflections upon this interview, and the dreadful ſubject of it, are ſoon after given in ſoliloquy, in which the poet has mixt the moſt touching ſtrokes of compunction with his meditations: He reaſons againſt the villainy of the act, and honour jointly with nature aſſails him with an argument of double force—

He's here in double truſt;
Firſt as I am his kinſman and his ſubject,

Strong

Strong both againſt the deed; then as his hoſt,
Who ſhou'd againſt the murtherer ſhut the door,
Not bear the knife himſelf.

This appeal to nature, hoſpitality and allegiance, was not without it's impreſſion; he again meets his lady, and immediately declares—

We will proceed no further in this buſineſs.

This draws a retort upon him, in which his tergiverſation and cowardice are ſatirized with ſo keen an edge, and interrogatory reproaches are preſſed ſo faſt upon him, that catching hold in his retreat of one ſmall but precious fragment in the wreck of innocence and honour, he demands a truce from her attack, and with the ſpirit of a combatant, who has not yet yielded up his weapons, cries out—

Pr'ythee, peace!

The words are no expletives; they do not fill up a ſentence, but they form one: They ſtand in a moſt important paſs; they defend the breach her ambition has made in his heart; a breach in the very citadel of humanity; they mark the laſt dignified ſtruggle

ſtruggle of virtue, and they have a double reflecting power, which in the firſt place ſhews that nothing but the voice of authority could ſtem the torrent of her invective, and in the next place announces that ſomething, worthy of the ſolemn audience he had demanded, was on the point to follow —and worthy it is to be a ſtandard ſentiment of moral truth expreſſed with proverbial ſimplicity, ſinking into every heart that hears it—

I dare do all, that may become a man,
Who dares do more is none.

How muſt every feeling ſpectator lament that a man ſhould fall from virtue with ſuch an appeal upon his lips!

Οὐκ ἔστιν ἀδεὶς δειλὸς, ὁ δεδοικὼς νόμον.
(PHILONIDES.)

A man is not a coward becauſe he fears to be unjuſt, is the ſentiment of an old dramatic poet.

Macbeth's principle is honour; cruelty is natural to his wife; ambition is common to both; one paſſion favourable to her purpoſe has taken place in his heart; another ſtill

ſtill hangs about it, which being adverſe to her plot, is firſt to be expelled, before ſhe can inſtil her cruelty into his nature. The ſentiment above quoted had been firmly delivered, and was uſhered in with an apoſtrophe ſuitable to its importance; ſhe feels its weight; ſhe perceives it is not to be turned aſide with contempt, or laughed down by ridicule, as ſhe had already done where weaker ſcruples had ſtood in the way; but, taking ſophiſtry in aid, by a ready turn of argument ſhe gives him credit for his ſentiment, erects a more glittering though fallacious logic upon it, and by admitting his objection cunningly confutes it——

What beaſt was't then
That made you break this enterprize to me?
When you durſt do it, then you were a man,
And to be more than what you were, you wou'd
Be ſo much more than man.

Having thus parried his objection by a ſophiſtry calculated to blind his reaſon and enflame his ambition, ſhe breaks forth into ſuch a vaunting diſplay of hardened intrepidity, as preſents one of the moſt terrific pictures that was ever imagined—

I have

I have given ſuck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me;
I wou'd, whilſt it was ſmiling in my face,
Have pluckt my nipple from its boneleſs gums,
And daſht it's brains out, had I but ſo ſworn
As you have done to this.

This is a note of horror, ſcrewed to a pitch that burſts the very ſinews of nature; ſhe no longer combats with human weapon, but ſeizing the flaſh of the lightning extinguiſhes her opponent with the ſtroke: Here the controverſy muſt end, for he muſt either adopt her ſpirit, or take her life: He ſinks under the attack, and offering nothing in delay of execution but a feeble heſitation, founded in fear—*If we ſhould fail* —he concludes with an aſſumed ferocity, caught from her and not ſpringing from himſelf—

I am ſettled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.

The ſtrong and ſublime ſtrokes of a maſter impreſſed upon this ſcene make it a model of dramatic compoſition, and I muſt in this place remind the reader of the obſervation I have before hinted at, that no reference whatever is had to the auguries of the

the witches: It would be injuſtice to ſuppoſe that this was other than a purpoſed omiſſion by the poet; a weaker genius would have reſorted back to theſe inſtruments; Shakeſpear had uſed and laid them aſide for a time; he had a ſtronger engine at work, and he could proudly exclaim—

We defy auguries!——

Nature was ſufficient for that work, and to ſhew the maſtery he had over nature, he took his human agent from the weaker ſex.

This having paſſed in the firſt act, the murder is perpetrated in the ſucceeding one. The introductory ſoliloquy of Macbeth, the chimæra of the dagger, and the ſignal on the bell, are awful preludes to the deed. In this dreadful interim Lady Macbeth, the great ſuperintending ſpirit, enters to ſupport the dreadful work. It is done; and he returns appalled with ſounds; he ſurveys his bloody hands with horror; he ſtarts from her propoſal of going back to beſmear the guards of Duncan's chamber, and ſhe ſnatches the reeking daggers from his trembling hands to finiſh the imperfect work—

Infirm of purpoſe,
Give me the daggers!

She returns on the ſcene, the deed which he revolted from is performed, and with the ſame unſhaken ferocity ſhe vauntingly diſplays her bloody trophies, and exclaims—

My hands are of your colour, but I ſhame
To wear a heart ſo white.

Fancied noiſes, the throbbings of his own quailing heart, had ſhaken the conſtancy of Macbeth; real ſounds, the certain ſignals of approaching viſiters, to whom the ſituation of Duncan muſt be revealed, do not intimidate her; ſhe is prepared for all trials, and coolly tells him——

I hear a knocking
At the ſouth entry: Retire we to our chamber;
A little water clears us of this deed.
How eaſy is it then!

The ſeveral incidents thrown together in this ſcene of the murder of Duncan, are of ſo ſtriking a ſort as to need no elucidation; they are better felt than deſcribed, and my attempts

attempts point at paſſages of more obſcurity, where the touches are thrown into ſhade, and the art of the author lies more out of ſight.

Lady Macbeth being now retired from the ſcene, we may in this interval, as we did in the concluſion of the former paper, permit the genius of Æſchylus to introduce a rival murdereſs on the ſtage.

Clytemneſtra has received her huſband Agamemnon, on his return from the capture of Troy, with ſtudied rather than cordial congratulations. He oppoſes the pompous ceremonies ſhe had deviſed for the diſplay of his entry, with a magnanimous contempt of ſuch adulation—

Sooth me not with ſtrains
Of adulation, as a girl; nor raiſe
As to ſome proud barbaric king, that loves
Loud acclamations echoed from the mouths
Of proſtrate worſhippers, a clamorous welcome:
Spread not the ſtreets with tapeſtry; 'tis invidious:
Theſe are the honours we ſhou'd pay the gods;
For mortal men to tread on ornaments
Of rich embroidery—no; I dare not do it:
Reſpect me as a man, not as a god.

(POTTER'S ÆSCHYLUS.)

Theſe are heroic ſentiments, but in concluſion the perſuaſions of the wife overcome the modeſt ſcruples of the hero, and he enters his palace in the pomp of triumph; when ſoon his dying groans are echoed from the interior ſcene, and the adultreſs comes forth beſprinkled with the blood of her huſband to avow the murder—

I ſtruck him twice, and twice
He groan'd; then died: A third time as he lay
I gor'd him with a wound; a grateful preſent
To the ſtern god, that in the realms below
Reigns o'er the dead: There let him take his ſeat.
He lay; and ſpouting from his wounds a ſtream
Of blood, bedew'd me with theſe crimſon drops.
I glory in them, like the genial earth,
When the warm ſhowers of heav'n deſcend, and wake
The flowrets to unfold their vermeil leaves.
Come then, ye reverend ſenators of Argos,
Joy with me, if your hearts be turn'd to joy,
And ſuch I wiſh them.

(POTTER.)

No. LXXI.

Ille per extentum funem mihi poſſe videtur
Ire poeta, meum qui pectus inaniter angit,
Irritat, mulcet, falſis terroribus implet,
Ut magus; et modo me Thebis, modo ponit
Athenis. (HORAT.)

RICHARD perpetrates ſeveral murders, but as the poet has not marked them with any diſtinguiſhing circumſtances, they need not be enumerated on this occaſion. Some of theſe he commits in his paſſage to power, others after he has ſeated himſelf on the throne. Ferociouſneſs and hypocriſy are the prevailing features of his character, and as he has no one honourable or humane principle to combat, there is no opening for the poet to develope thoſe ſecret workings of conſcience, which he has ſo naturally done in the caſe of Macbeth.

The murder of Clarence, thoſe of the queen's kinſmen, and of the young princes in the Tower, are all perpetrated in the ſame ſtile of hardened cruelty. He takes the ordinary method of hiring ruffians to

perform his bloody commiſſions, and there is nothing which particularly marks the ſcenes, wherein he imparts his purpoſes and inſtructions to them; a very little management ſerves even for Tirrel, who is not a profeſſional murderer, but is reported to be——

——a diſcontented gentleman,
Whoſe humble means match not his haughty ſpirit.

With ſuch a ſpirit Richard does not hold it neceſſary to uſe much circumlocution, and ſeems more in dread of delay than diſappointment or diſcovery——

R. *Is thy name Tirrel?*
T. *James Tirrel, and your moſt obedient ſubject.*
R. *Art thou indeed?*
T. *Prove me, my gracious lord.*
R. *Dar'ſt thou reſolve to kill a friend of mine?*
T. *Pleaſe you, I had rather kill two enemies.*
R. *Why then thou haſt it; two deep enemies,*
Foes to my reſt and my ſweet ſleep's diſturbers,
Are they that I would have thee deal upon:
Tirrel, I mean thoſe baſtards in the Tower.

If the reader calls to mind by what circumſpect and ſlow degrees King John opens himſelf to Hubert under a ſimilar ſituation with

with this of Richard, he will be convinced that Shakeſpear conſidered preſervation of character too important to ſacrifice on any occaſion to the vanity of fine writing; for the ſcene he has given to John, a timorous and wary prince, would ill ſuit the character of Richard. A cloſe obſervance of nature is the firſt excellence of a dramatic poet, and the peculiar property of him we are reviewing.

In theſe two ſtages of our compariſon, Macbeth appears with far more dramatic effect than Richard, whoſe firſt ſcenes preſent us with little elſe than traits of perfidiouſneſs, one ſtriking incident of ſucceſsful hypocriſy practiſed on the Lady Anne, and an open unreſerved diſplay of remorſeleſs cruelty. Impatient of any pauſe or interruption in his meaſures, a dangerous friend and a determined foe:—

Effera torquebant avidæ præcordia curæ
Effugeret ne quis gladios
Creſcebat ſcelerata ſitis; prædæque recentis
Incæſtus flagrabat amor, nulluſque petendi
Cogendive pudor: crebris perjuria nectit
Blanditiis; ſociat perituro fœdere dextras:
Si ſemel e tantis poſcenti quiſque negaſſet,
Effera prætumido quatiebat corda furore.

(CLAUDIAN.)

The ſole remorſe his greedy heart can feel
Is if one life eſcapes his murdering ſteel:
That, which ſhould quench, inflames his craving thirſt,
The ſecond draught ſtill deepens on the firſt;
Shameleſs by force or fraud to work his way,
And no leſs prompt to flatter than betray:
This hour makes friendſhips which he breaks the next,
And every breach ſupplies a vile pretext
Baſely to cancel all conceſſions paſt,
If in a thouſand you deny the laſt.

Macbeth has now touched the goal of his ambition—

Thou haſt it now; King, Cawdor, Glamis, all
The weyward ſiſters promis'd——

The auguries of the witches, to which no reference had been made in the heat of the main action, are now called to mind with many circumſtances of galling aggravation, not only as to the prophecy, which gave the crown to the poſterity of Banquo, but alſo of his own ſafety from the gallant and noble nature of that general—

Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that, which wou'd be fear'd.

Aſſaſſins are provided to murder Banquo and his

his ſon, but this is not decided upon without much previous meditation, and he ſeems prompted to the act more by deſperation and dread, than by any ſettled reſolution or natural cruelty. He convenes the aſſaſſins, and in a conference of ſome length works round to his point, by inſinuations calculated to perſuade them to diſpatch Banquo for injuries done to them, rather than from motives which reſpect himſelf; in which ſcene we diſcover a remarkable perſervation of character in Macbeth, who by this artifice ſtrives to blind his own conſcience and throw the guilt upon theirs: In this as in the former action there is nothing kingly in his cruelty; in one he acted under the controuling ſpirit of his wife, here he plays the ſycophant with hired aſſaſſins, and confeſſes himſelf under awe of the ſuperior genius of Banquo—

—Under him
My genius is rebuk'd, as it is ſaid
Antony's was by Cæſar.

There is not a circumſtance ever ſo minute in the conduct of this character, which does not point out to a diligent obſerver how

cloſely the poet has adhered to nature in every part of his delineation: Accordingly we obſerve a peculiarity in the language of Macbeth, which is highly characteriſtic; I mean the figurative turn of his expreſſions, whenever his imagination ſtrikes upon any gloomy ſubject—

Oh! full of ſcorpions is my mind, dear wife!

And in this ſtate of ſelf-torment every object of ſolemnity, though ever ſo familiar, becomes an object of terror; night, for inſtance, is not mentioned by him without an accompaniment of every melancholy attribute, which a frighted fancy can annex—

Ere the bat hath flown
His cloiſter'd flight, ere to black Hecate's ſummons
The ſhard-born beetle with his drowſy hums
Hath rung Night's *yawning peal, there ſhall be done*
A deed of dreadful note.

It is the darkneſs of his ſoul that makes the night ſo dreadful, the *ſcorpions in his mind* convoke theſe images—but he has not yet done with it—

Come

Come, ſealing Night!
Skarf up the tender eye of pitiful day;
And with thy bloody and inviſible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond,
Which keeps me pale. Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood.
Good things of day begin to droop and drowſe,
Whilſt Night's *black agents to their prey do rouſe.*

The critic of language will obſerve that here is a redundancy and crowd of metaphors, but the critic of nature will acknowledge that it is the very truth of character, and join me in the remark which points it out.

In a tragedy ſo replete with murder, and in the diſplay of a character ſo tortured by *the ſcorpions of the mind*, as this of Macbeth, it is naturally to be expected that a genius like Shakeſpear's will call in the dead for their ſhare in the horror of the ſcene. This he has done in two ſeveral ways; firſt, by the apparition of Banquo, which is inviſible to all but Macbeth; ſecondly, by the ſpells and incantations of the witches, who raiſe ſpirits, which in certain ænigmatical predictions ſhadow out his fate; and theſe are followed by a train of unborn revelations, drawn by the power of magic from the womb of futurity before their time.

It appears that Lady Macbeth was not a party in the aſſaſſination of Banquo, and the ghoſt, though twice viſible to the murderer, is not ſeen by her. This is another incident highly worthy a particular remark; for by keeping her free from any participation in the horror of the ſight, the poet is enabled to make a ſcene aſide between Macbeth and her, which contains ſome of the fineſt ſpeakings in the play. The ghoſt in Hamlet, and the ghoſt of Darius in Æſchylus are introduced by preparation and prelude, this of Banquo is an object of ſurprize as well as terror, and there is ſcarce an incident to be named of more ſtriking and dramatic effect: it is one amongſt various proofs, that muſt convince every man, who looks critically into Shakeſpear, that he was as great a maſter in art as in nature: How it ſtrikes me in this point of view, I ſhall take the liberty of explaining more at length.

The murder of Duncan is the main incident of this tragedy; that of Banquo is ſubordinate: Duncan's blood was not only the firſt ſo ſhed by Macbeth, but the dignity of the perſon murdered, and the aggravating circumſtances attending it, conſtitute a crime

a crime of the very firſt magnitude: For theſe reaſons it might be expected, that the ſpectre moſt likely to haunt his imagination, would be that of Duncan; and the rather becauſe his terror and compunction were ſo much more ſtrongly excited by this firſt murder, perpetrated with his own hands, than by the ſubſequent one of Banquo, palliated by evaſion and committed to others. But when we recollect that Lady Macbeth was not only his accomplice, but in fact the firſt mover in the murder of the king, we ſee good reaſon why Duncan's ghoſt could not be called up, unleſs ſhe, who ſo deeply partook of the guilt, had alſo ſhared in the horror of the appearance; and as viſitations of a peculiar ſort were reſerved for her in a later period of the drama, it was a point of conſummate art and judgment to exclude her from the affair of Banquo's murder, and make the more ſuſceptible conſcience of Macbeth figure this apparition in his mind's eye without any other witneſs to the viſion.

I perſuade myſelf theſe will appear very natural reaſons, why the poet did not raiſe the ghoſt of the king in preference, though

it is reaſonable to think it would have been a much more noble incident in his hands, than this of Banquo. It now remains to examine whether this is more fully juſtified by the peculiar ſituation reſerved for Lady Macbeth, to which I have before adverted.

The intrepidity of her character is ſo marked, that we may well ſuppoſe no waking terrors could ſhake it, and in this light it muſt be acknowledged a very natural expedient to make her vent the agonies of her conſcience in ſleep. Dreams have been a dramatic expedient ever ſince there has been a drama; Æſchylus recites the dream of Clytemneſtra immediately before her ſon Oreſtes kills her; ſhe fancies ſhe has given birth to a dragon—

This new-born dragon, like an infant child,
Laid in the cradle ſeem'd in want of food;
And in her dream ſhe held it to her breaſt:
The milk he drew was mixt with clotted blood.

(POTTER.)

This which is done by Æſchylus, has been done by hundreds after him; but to introduce upon the ſcene the very perſon, walking in ſleep, and giving vent to the horrid fancies, that haunt her dream, in broken

ſpeeches

ſpeeches expreſſive of her guilt, uttered before witneſſes, and accompanied with that natural and expreſſive action of waſhing the blood from her defiled hands, was reſerved for the original and bold genius of Shakeſpear only. It is an incident ſo full of tragic horror, ſo daring and at the ſame time ſo truly characteriſtic, that it ſtands out as a prominent feature in the moſt ſublime drama in the world, and fully compenſates for any ſacrifices the poet might have made in the previous arrangement of his incidents.

No. LXXII.

Servetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto proceſſerit, et ſibi conſtet.
(HORAT.)

MACBETH now approaches towards his cataſtrophe: The heir of the crown is in arms, and he muſt defend valiantly what he has uſurped villainouſly. His natural valour does not ſuffice for this trial; he reſorts to the witches; he conjures them to give

give anſwer to what he ſhall aſk, and he again runs into all thoſe pleonaſms of ſpeech, which I before remarked: The predictions he extorts from the apparitions are ſo couched as to ſeem favourable to him, at the ſame time that they correſpond with events, which afterwards prove fatal. The management of this incident has ſo cloſe a reſemblance to what the poet Claudian has done in the inſtance of Ruffinus's viſion the night before his maſſacre, that I am tempted to inſert the paſſage—

Ecce videt diras alludere protinus umbras,
Quas dedit ipſe neci; quarum quæ clarior una
Viſa loqui—Proh! ſurge toro; quid plurima volvis
Anxius? hæc requiem rebus, finemque labori
Allatura dies: Omni jam plebe redibis
Altior, et læti manibus portabere vulgi—
Has canit ambages. Occulto fallitur ille
Omine, nec capitis fixi præſagia ſenſit.

A ghaſtly viſion in the dead of night
Of mangled, murder'd ghoſts appall his ſight;
When hark! a voice from forth the ſhadowy train
Cries out—Awake! what thoughts perplex thy brain?
Awake, ariſe! behold the day appears,
That ends thy labours, and diſpels thy fears:
To loftier heights thy tow'ring head ſhall riſe,
And the glad crowd ſhall lift thee to the ſkies—
Thus ſpake the voice: He triumphs, nor beneath
Th' ambiguous omen ſees the doom of death.

Confiding

Confiding in his auguries Macbeth now prepares for battle: by the firſt of theſe he is aſſured—

That none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth.

By the ſecond prediction he is told—

Macbeth ſhall never vanquiſht be, until
Great Birnam-wood to Dunſinane's high hill
Shall come againſt him.

Theſe he calls *ſweet boadments!* and concludes—

To ſleep in ſpite of thunder.

This play is ſo replete with excellencies, that it would exceed all bounds, if I were to notice every one; I paſs over therefore that incomparable ſcene between Macbeth, the phyſician and Seyton, in which the agitations of his mind are ſo wonderfully expreſſed, and, without pauſing for the death of Lady Macbeth, I conduct the reader to that criſis, when the meſſenger has announced the ominous approach of Birnam-wood — A burſt of fury, an exclamation ſeconded by a blow is the firſt natural exploſion of a ſoul

ſo

ſo ſtung with *ſcorpions* as Macbeth's: The ſudden guſt is no ſooner diſcharged, than nature ſpeaks her own language, and the ſtill voice of conſcience, like reaſon in the midſt of madneſs, murmurs forth theſe mournful words—

I pall in reſolution, and begin
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend,
That lies like truth.

With what an exquiſite feeling has this darling ſon of nature here thrown in this touching, this pathetic ſentence, amidſt the very whirl and eddy of conflicting paſſions! Here is a ſtudy for dramatic poets; this is a ſtring for an actor's ſkill to touch; this will diſcourſe ſweet muſic to the human heart, with which it is finely uniſoned when ſtruck with the hand of a maſter.

The next ſtep brings us to the laſt ſcene of Macbeth's dramatic exiſtence: Fluſht with the blood of Siward he is encountered by Macduff, who croſſes him like his evil genius—Macbeth cries out—

Of all men elſe I have avoided thee.

To the laſt moment of character the faithful

ſul poet ſupports him: He breaks off from ſingle combat, and in the tremendous pauſe, ſo beautifully contrived to hang ſuſpenſe and terror on the moral ſcene of his exit, the tyrant driven to bay, and panting with the heat and ſtruggle of the fight, vauntingly exclaims—

Macb. *As eaſy may'ſt thou the intrenchant air*
With thy keen ſword impreſs, as make me bleed:
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable creſts,
I bear a charmed life, which muſt not yield
To one of woman born.
Macd. *Deſpair thy charm!*
And let the Angel, whom thou ſtill haſt ſerv'd,
Tell thee Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripp'd.
Macb. *Accurſed be that tongue that tells me ſo!*
For it hath cow'd my better part of man.

There ſinks the ſpirit of Macbeth—

Behold! where ſtands
Th' uſurper's curſed head!

How completely does this coincide with the paſſage already quoted!

Occulto fallitur ille
Omine, nec CAPITIS FIXI *præſagia ſentit.*

Let us now approach the tent of *Richard*.

It

It is matter of admiration to obſerve how many incidents the poet has collected in a ſmall compaſs, to ſet the military character of his chief perſonage in a brilliant point of view. A ſucceſſion of ſcouts and meſſengers report a variety of intelligence, all which, though generally of the moſt alarming nature, he meets not only with his natural gallantry, but ſometimes with pleaſantry, and a certain archneſs and repartee, which is peculiar to him throughout the drama.

It is not only a curious, but delightful taſk to examine by what ſubtle and almoſt imperceptible touches Shakeſpear contrives to ſet ſuch marks upon his characters, as give them the moſt living likeneſſes that can be conceived. In this, above all other poets that ever exiſted, he is a ſtudy and a model of perfection: The great diſtinguiſhing paſſions every poet may deſcribe; but Shakeſpear gives you their humours, their minuteſt foibles, thoſe little ſtarts and caprices, which nothing but the moſt intimate familiarity brings to light: Other authors write characters like hiſtorians; he like the boſom friend of the perſon

he

he deſcribes. The following extracts will furniſh an example of what I have been ſaying.

Ratcliff informs Richard that a fleet is diſcovered on the weſtern coaſt, ſuppoſed to be the party of Richmond—

K. Rich. *Some light-foot friend poſt to the Duke of Norfolk;*
Ratcliff, thyſelf; or Cateſby—Where is he?
Cateſ. *Here, my good lord.*
K. Rich. *Cateſby, fly to the Duke.*
Cateſ. *I will, my lord, with all convenient haſte.*
K. Rich. *Ratcliff, come hither; poſt to Saliſbury;*
When thou com'ſt thither—Dull, unmindful villain!
(To Cateſby.)
Why ſtay'ſt thou here, and go'ſt not to the Duke?
Cateſ. *Firſt, mighty liege, tell me your highneſs' pleaſure,*
What from your grace I ſhall deliver to him.
K. Rich. *Oh, true, good Cateſby!*

I am perſuaded I need not point out to the reader's ſenſibility the fine turn in this expreſſion, *Good Cateſby!* How can we be ſurpriſed if ſuch a poet makes us in love even with his villains?—Ratcliff proceeds—

Rat. *What may it pleaſe you ſhall I do at Saliſbury?*
K. Rich. *Why, what wou'ſt thou do there before I go?*
Rat. *Your highneſs told me I ſhou'd poſt before.*
K. Rich. *My mind is chang'd.*

Theſe

Theſe fine touches can eſcape no man, who has an eye for nature. Lord Stanley reports to Richard—

> Stanl. *Richmond is on the ſeas.*
> K. Rich. *There let him ſink, and be the ſeas on him!*
> *White-liver'd runagate, what doth he there?*

This reply is pointed with irony and invective: There are two cauſes in nature and character for this; firſt, Richard was before informed of the news; his paſſion was not taken by ſurprize, and he was enough at eaſe to make a play upon Stanley's words—*on the ſeas*—and retort—*be the ſeas on him!*—Secondly, Stanley was a ſuſpected ſubject, Richard was therefore intereſted to ſhew a contempt of his competitor before a man of ſuch doubtful allegiance. In the ſpirit of this impreſſion he urges Stanley to give an explicit anſwer to the queſtion—*What doth he there?* Stanley endeavours to evade by anſwering that he *knows not but by gueſs*: The evaſion only ſtrengthens Richard's ſuſpicions, and he again puſhes him to diſcloſe what he only gueſſes—*Well, as you gueſs*—Stanley replies—

He makes for England, here to claim the crown.
K. Rich. *Is the chair empty? Is the ſword unſway'd?*
Is the king dead? the empire unpoſſeſs'd?
What heir of York is there alive but we?
And who is England's king but great York's heir?
Then tell me what makes he upon the ſea?

What a cluſter of characteriſtic excellencies are here before us? All theſe interrogatories are *ad hominem*; they fit no man but Stanley, they can be uttered by no man but Richard, and they can flow from the conceptions of no poet but the poet of nature.

Stanley's whole ſcene ought to be inveſtigated, for it is full of beauties, but I confeſs myſelf exhauſted with the taſk, and language does not ſuffice to furniſh freſh terms of admiration, which a cloſer ſcrutiny would call forth.

Other meſſengers ſucceed Lord Stanley, Richard's fiery impatience does not wait the telling, but taking the outſet of the account to be ominous, he ſtrikes the courier, who proceeding with his report concludes with the good tidings of Buckingham's diſperſion—Richard inſtantly retracts and ſays—

Oh! I cry thee mercy.
There is my purſe to cure that blow of thine.

This

This is another trait of the ſame caſt with that of *Good Cateſby*.

Battles are of the growth of modern tragedy; I am not learned enough in the old ſtage to know if Shakeſpear is the inventor of this bold and buſtling innovation; but I am ſure he is unrivalled in his execution of it, and this of Boſworth-field is a maſter-piece. I ſhall be leſs particular in my preſent deſcription of it, becauſe I may probably bring it under general review with other ſcenes of the like ſort.

It will be ſufficient to obſerve, that in the cataſtrophe of Richard nothing can be more glowing than the ſcene, nothing more brilliant than the conduct of the chief character: He exhibits the character of a perfect general, in whom however ardent courage ſeems the ruling feature; he performs every part of his office with minute attention, he enquires if certain alterations are made in his armour, and even orders what particular horſe he intends to charge with: He is gay with his chief officers, and even gracious to ſome he confides in: His gallantry is of ſo dazzling a quality, that we begin to feel the pride of Engliſhmen,

and, overlooking his crimes, glory in our courageous king: Richmond is one of thoſe civil, conſcientious gentlemen, who are not very apt to captivate a ſpectator, and Richard, loaded as he is with enormities, riſes in the compariſon, and I ſuſpect carries the good wiſhes of many of his audience into action, and dies with their regret.

As ſoon as he retires to his tent the poet begins to put in motion his great moral machinery of the ghoſts. Trifles are not made for Shakeſpear; difficulties, that would have plunged the ſpirit of any other poet, and turned his ſcenery into inevitable ridicule, are nothing in his way; he brings forward a long ſtring of ghoſts, and puts a ſpeech into each of their mouths without any fear of conſequences. Richard ſtarts from his couch, and before he has ſhaken off the terrors of his dream, cries out—

Give me another horſe!—Bind up my wounds!—
Have mercy, Jeſu!—Soft, I did but dream—
O coward conſcience—&c.

But I may conclude my ſubject; every reader can go on with the ſoliloquy, and no words of mine can be wanted to excite their admiration.

No. LXXIII.

When it had entered into the mind of Shakeſpear, to form an hiſtorical play upon certain events in the reign of Henry the fourth of England, the character of the Prince of Wales recommended itſelf to his fancy, as likely to ſupply him with a fund of dramatic incidents; for what could invention have more happily ſuggeſted than this character, which hiſtory preſented ready to his hands? a riotous diſorderly young libertine, in whoſe nature lay hidden thoſe ſeeds of heroiſm and ambition, which were to burſt forth at once to the aſtoniſhment of the world, and to atchieve the conqueſt of France. This prince, whoſe character was deſtined to exhibit a revolution of ſo brilliant a ſort, was not only in himſelf a very tempting hero for the dramatic poet, who delights in incidents of novelty and ſurprize, but alſo offered to his imagination a train of attendant characters, in the perſons of his wild comrades and aſſociates, which would be of themſelves a drama. Here was a field for

for invention wide enough even for the genius of Shakeſpear to range in. All the humours, paſſions and extravagancies of human life might be brought into the compoſition, and when he had grouped and perſonified them to his taſte and liking, he had a leader ready to place at the head of the train, and the truth of hiſtory to give life and intereſt to his drama.

With theſe materials ready for creation the great artiſt ſate down to his work; the canvaſs was ſpread before him, ample and capacious as the expanſe of his own fancy; nature put her pencil into his hand, and he began to ſketch. His firſt concern was to give a chief or captain to this gang of rioters; this would naturally be the firſt outline he drew. To fill up the drawing of this perſonage he conceived a voluptuary, in whoſe figure and character there ſhould be an aſſemblage of comic qualities; in his perſon he ſhould be bloated and blown up to the ſize of a *Silenus*, lazy, luxurious, in ſenſuality a ſatyr, in intemperance a bacchanalian: As he was to ſtand in the poſt of a ringleader amongſt thieves and cutpurſes, he made him a notorious liar, a ſwagger-

ing coward, vain-glorious, arbitrary, knaviſh, crafty, voracious of plunder, laviſh of his gains, without credit, honour or honeſty, and in debt to every body about him: As he was to be the chief ſeducer and miſleader of the heir apparent of the crown, it was incumbent on the poet to qualify him for that part in ſuch a manner as ſhould give probability and even a plea to the temptation; this was only to be done by the ſtrongeſt touches and the higheſt colourings of a maſter; by hitting off a humour of ſo happy, ſo facetious and ſo alluring a caſt, as ſhould tempt even royalty to forget itſelf, and virtue to turn reveller in his company. His lies, his vanity and his cowardice, too groſs to deceive, were to be ſo ingenious as to give delight; his cunning evaſions, his witty reſources, his mock ſolemnity, his vapouring ſelf-conſequence, were to furniſh a continual feaſt of laughter to his royal companion; he was not only to be witty himſelf, but the cauſe of wit in other people; a whetſtone for raillery; a buffoon, whoſe very perſon was a jeſt: Compounded of theſe humours, Shakeſpear produced the character of *Sir John Falſtaff*; a character,

character, which neither ancient nor modern comedy has ever equalled, which was ſo much the favourite of its author as to be introduced in three ſeveral plays, and which is likely to be the idol of the Engliſh ſtage, as long as it ſhall ſpeak the language of Shakeſpear.

This character almoſt ſingly ſupports the whole comic plot of the firſt part of Henry the fourth; the poet has indeed thrown in ſome auxiliary humours in the perſons of Gadſhill, Peto, Bardolph, and Hoſteſs Quickly; the two firſt ſerve for little elſe except to fill up the action, but Bardolph as a butt to Falſtaff's raillery, and the hoſteſs in her wrangling ſcene with him, when his pockets had been emptied as he was aſleep in the tavern, give occaſion to ſcenes of infinite pleaſantry: Poins is contraſted from the reſt of the gang, and as he is made the companion of the prince, is very properly repreſented as a man of better qualities and morals than Falſtaff's more immediate hangers-on and dependants.

The humour of Falſtaff opens into full diſplay upon his very firſt introduction with the prince; the incident of the robbery on

the highway, the ſcene in Eaſtcheap in conſequence of that ridiculous encounter, and the whole of his conduct during the action with Percy, are ſo exquiſitely pleaſant, that upon the renovation of his dramatic life in the ſecond part of Henry the fourth, I queſtion if the humour does not in part evaporate by continuation; at leaſt I am perſuaded that it flattens a little in the outſet, and though his wit may not flow leſs copiouſly, yet it comes with more labour and is farther fetcht. The poet ſeems to have been ſenſible how difficult it was to preſerve the vein as rich as at firſt, and has therefore ſtrengthened his comic plot in the ſecond play with ſeveral new recruits, who may take a ſhare with Falſtaff, to whom he no longer entruſts the whole burthen of the humour. In the front of theſe auxiliaries ſtands Piſtol, a character ſo new, whimſical and extravagant, that if it were not for a commentator now living, whoſe very extraordinary reſearches, amongſt our old authors, have ſupplied us with paſſages to illuminate the ſtrange rhapſodies which Shakeſpear has put into his mouth, I ſhould for one have thought Antient Piſtol

as

as wild and imaginary a being as Caliban; but I now perceive, by the help of theſe diſcoveries, that the character is *made up in great part of abſurd and fuſtian paſſages from many plays, in which Shakeſpear* was verſed and perhaps *had been a performer:* Piſtol's dialogue is a tiſſue of old tags of bombaſt, like the middle comedy of the Greeks, which dealt in parody. I abate of my aſtoniſhment at the invention and originality of the poet, but it does not leſſen my reſpect for his ingenuity. Shakeſpear founded his bully in parody, Jonſon copied his from nature, and the palm ſeems due to Bobadil upon a compariſon with Piſtol; Congreve copied a very happy likeneſs from Jonſon, and by the faireſt and moſt laudable imitation produced his Noll Bluff, one of the pleaſanteſt humouriſts on the comic ſtage.

Shallow and Silence are two very ſtrong auxiliaries to this ſecond part of Falſtaff's humours, and though they do not abſolutely belong to his family, they are nevertheleſs near of kin, and derivatives from his ſtock: Surely two pleaſanter fellows never trode the ſtage; they not only contraſt and play

upon each other, but Silence ſober and Silence tipſy make the moſt comical reverſe in nature; never was drunkenneſs ſo well introduced or ſo happily employed in any drama: The dialogue between Shallow and Falſtaff, and the deſcription given by the latter of Shallow's youthful frolicks, are as true nature and as true comedy as man's invention ever produced: The recruits are alſo in the literal ſenſe the recruits of the drama. Theſe perſonages have the further merit of throwing Falſtaff's character into a new caſt, and giving it the ſeaſonable relief of variety.

Dame Quickly alſo in this ſecond part reſumes her rôle with great comic ſpirit, but with ſome variation of character, for the purpoſe of introducing a new member into the troop in the perſon of Doll Tearſheet, the common trull of the times. Though this part is very ſtrongly coloured, and though the ſcene with her and Falſtaff is of a looſe as well as ludicrous nature, yet if we compare Shakeſpear's conduct of this incident with that of the dramatic writers of his time, and even ſince his time, we muſt confeſs he has managed it with more than common care, and exhibited his comic hero

in

in a very ridiculous light, without any of thoſe groſs indecencies which the poets of his age indulged themſelves in without reſtraint.

The humour of the Prince of Wales is not ſo free and unconſtrained as in the firſt part; though he ſtill demeans himſelf in the courſe of his revels, yet it is with frequent marks of repugnance and ſelf-conſideration, as becomes the conqueror of Percy, and we ſee his character approaching faſt towards a thorough reformation; but though we are thus prepared for the change that is to happen, when this young hero throws off the reveller and aſſumes the king, yet we are not fortified againſt the weakneſs of pity, when the diſappointment and baniſhment of Falſtaff takes place, and the poet executes juſtice upon his inimitable delinquent, with all the rigour of an unrelenting moraliſt. The reader or ſpectator, who has accompanied Falſtaff through his dramatic ſtory, is in debt to him for ſo many pleaſant moments, that all his failings, which ſhould have raiſed contempt, have only provoked laughter, and he begins to think they are not natural to his character, but aſſumed

for his amuſement. With theſe impreſſions we ſee him delivered over to mortification and diſgrace, and bewail his puniſhment with a ſenſibility, that is only due to the ſufferings of the virtuous.

As it is impoſſible to aſcertain the limits of Shakeſpear's genius, I will not preſume to ſay he could not have ſupported his humour, had he choſen to have prolonged his exiſtence thro' the ſucceeding drama of Henry the Fifth; we may conclude, that no ready expedient preſented itſelf to his fancy, and he was not apt to ſpend much pains in ſearching for ſuch: He therefore put him to death, by which he fairly placed him out of the reach of his contemporaries, and got rid of the trouble and difficulty of keeping him up to his original pitch, if he had attempted to carry him through a third drama, after he had removed the Prince of Wales out of his company, and ſeated him on the throne. I cannot doubt but there were reſources in Shakeſpear's genius, and a latitude of humour in the character of Falſtaff, which might have furniſhed ſcenes of admirable comedy by exhibiting him in his diſgrace, and both Shallow and Silence would have been acceſſaries to his pleaſantry:

try: Even the field of Agincourt, and the diſtreſs of the king's army before the action, had the poet thought proper to have produced Falſtaff on the ſcene, might have been as fruitful in comic incidents as the battle of Shrewſbury: this we can readily believe from the humours of Fluellen and Piſtol, which he has woven into his drama; the former of whom is made to remind us of Falſtaff, in his dialogue with Captain Gower, when he tells him that—*As Alexander is kill his friend Clytus, being in his ales and his cups, ſo alſo Harry Monmouth, being in his right wits and his goot judgements, is turn away the fat Knight with the great pelly-doublet: He was full of jeſts and gypes and knaveries, and mocks; I am forget his name.—Sir John Falſtaff.—That is he.*——This paſſage has ever given me a pleaſing ſenſation, as it marks a regret in the poet to part with a favourite character, and is a tender farewel to his memory: It is alſo with particular propriety that theſe words are put into the mouth of Fluellen, who ſtands here as his ſubſtitute, and whoſe humour, as well as that of Nym, may be ſaid to have ariſen out of the aſhes of Falſtaff.

No. LXXIV.

I WAS ſurpriſed the other day to find our learned poet Ben Jonſon had been poaching in an obſcure collection of love-letters, written by the ſophiſt Philoſtratus in a very rhapſodical ſtile, merely for the purpoſe of ſtringing together a parcel of unnatural far-fetched conceits, more calculated to diſguſt a man of Jonſon's claſſic taſte, than to put him upon the humble taſk of copying them, and then fathering the tranſlation. The little poem he has taken from this deſpicable ſophiſt is now become a very popular ſong, and is the ninth in his collection intitled *The Foreſt*.

I will take the liberty of inſerting Jonſon's tranſlation, and compare it with the original, ſtanza by ſtanza—

I.

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine,
Or leave a kiſs but in the cup,
And I'll not look for wine.

" PHILO-

" PHILOSTRATUS, Letter XXIV.

" Ἐμοὶ δὲ μόνοις τρόπινε τοῖς ὄμμασιν—
" *Drink to me with thine eyes only.* Ἐι δὲ
" βάλει, τοῖς χείλεσι τροσφέρασα, πλήρα φιλημά
" των τὸ ἔκπωμα, καὶ ἄ τως δίδα. *Or if thou*
" *wilt, putting the cup to thy lips, fill it with*
" *kiſſes, and ſo beſtow it upon me.*"

II.

The thirſt, that from the ſoul doth riſe,
Demands a drink divine,
But might I of Jove's nectar ſip,
I wou'd not change for thine.

" PHIL. Letter XXV.

" Ἐγω, ἐπειδὰν ἴδω σε, διψῶ, καὶ τὸ ἔκπωμα
" κατέχων, καὶ τὸ μὲν ἄ τροσάγω τοῖς χείλεσι σᾶ
" δὲ ἴδα τίνων. *I, as ſoon as I behold thee, thirſt,*
" *and taking hold of the cup, do not indeed*
" *apply that to my lips for drink, but thee.*"

III.

I ſent thee late a roſy wreath,
Not ſo much honouring thee,
As giving it a hope that there
It might not withered be.

" PHIL. Letter XXX.

" Πέπομφά σοι στέφανον ῥόδων, ἃ σὲ τιμῶν, (καὶ
" τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ) ἀλλ' αὐτοῖς τι χαριζόμενος τοῖς
" ῥόδοις, ἵνα μὴ μαραυθῇ. *I ſend thee a roſy*
" *wreath, not ſo much honoring thee (though*
" *this alſo is in my thoughts) as beſtowing favor*
" *upon the roſes, that ſo they might not be*
" *withered.*"

IV.

But thou thereon didſt only breathe,
And ſent'ſt it back to me,
Since when it grows and ſmells I ſwear
Not of itſelf, but thee.

" PHIL. Letter XXXI.

" Εἰ δὲ βούλει τί φίλῳ χαρίζεσθαι, τὰ λείψανα
" αὐτῶν ἀντίπεμψον, μηκέτι ὄνεόντα ῥόδον μόνου
" ἀλλὰ καὶ σοῦ. *If thou would'ſt do a kindneſs*
" *to thy lover, ſend back the reliques of the*
" *roſes [I gave thee], for they will ſmell no*
" *longer of themſelves only, but of thee.*"

When the learned poet publiſhed his love-ſong without any acknowledgment to Philoſtratus, I hope the reaſon of his omitting

it was becauſe he did not chuſe to call the public curioſity to a peruſal of ſuch unſeemly and unnatural rhapſodies, as he had condeſcended to copy from.

Now I am upon the ſubject of Ben Jonſon, I ſhall take notice of two paſſages in *The Induction on the Stage*, prefixed to his play of *Bartholomew Fair*, in which he gives a ſly glance at Shakeſpear—*And then a ſubſtantial watch to have ſtolen in upon them, and taken them away with miſtaking words, as the faſhion is in the ſtage practice.*—It is plain he has *Dogberry* and *Verges* in his eye, and no leſs ſo in the following, that he points his ridicule againſt *Caliban* and the romance of *The Tempeſt*—*If there be never a* ſervant-monſter *in the fair who can help it*, he ſays, *nor a neſt of anticks? He is loth to make nature afraid in his plays, like thoſe that beget tales*, Tempeſts, *and ſuch like drolleries, to mix his head with other mens heels.*—If any of our commentators upon Shakeſpear have anticipated my remark upon theſe inſtances of Jonſon's propenſities to carp at their favorite poet, I have overlooked the annotation, but when I find him recommending to his audience ſuch a *farago* of vulgar ribaldry

baldry as *Bartholomew Fair*, by pretending to exalt it above ſuch exquiſite productions as *The Tempeſt* and *Much Ado about Nothing*, it is an act of warrantable retaliation to expoſe his vanity.

It is not always however that he betakes himſelf to theſe maſked attacks upon that ſublime genius, which he profeſſed to admire almoſt to idolatry, it muſt be owned he ſometimes meets him upon equal ground, and nobly contends with laudable emulation for the chaplet of victory: What I now particularly have in my eye is his *Maſque of the Queens*.

Many ingenious obſervations have been given to the public upon Shakeſpear's *Imaginary Beings*; his Caliban, Ariel, and all his family of witches, ghoſts, and fairies have been referred to as examples of his creative fancy, and with reaſon has his ſuperiority been aſſerted in the fabrication of theſe præternatural machines, and as to the art with which he has woven them into the fables of his dramas, and the incidents he has produced by their agency, he is in theſe particulars ſtill more indiſputably unrivalled; the language he has given to Caliban, and

no

no leſs characteriſtically to his Ariel, is ſo original, ſo inimitable, that it is more like magic than invention, and his fairy poetry is as happy as it can be: It were a jeſt to compare Æſchylus's ghoſt of Darius, or any ghoſt that ever walked, with the *perturbed ſpirit* of Hamlet: Great and merited encomiums have alſo been paſſed upon the *weird ſiſters* in that wonderful drama, and a decided preference given them over the famous *Erichtho* of Lucan: Preferable they doubtleſs are, if we contemplate them in their dramatic characters, and take into our account the grand and awful commiſſion, which they bear in that ſcene of tragic terror; but of their poetical ſuperiority, ſimply conſidered, I have ſome doubts; let me add to this, that when the learned commentator was inſtancing Lucan's Erichtho, it is matter of ſome wonder with me, how he came to overlook Jonſon's witches in the *Maſque of the Queens*.

As he has not however prevented me of the honour of bringing theſe two poetic champions together into the liſts, I will avail myſelf of the occaſion, and leave it with the ſpectators to decide upon the conteſt.

I will

I will only, as their herald, give notice that the combatants are enchanters, and he that has no taſte for necromancy, nor any ſcience in the terms of the art, has no right to give his voice upon the trial of ſkill.

SHAKESPEAR.

" *1ſt Witch.* Where has thou been, ſiſter?
" *2d* —— Killing ſwine.
" *3d* —— A ſailor's wife had cheſnuts in her lap,
" And mouncht, and mouncht, and mouncht—Give
" me, quoth I!
" Aroint thee, witch, the rump-fed ronyon cries.
" Her huſband's to Aleppo gone, maſter o' th' Tyger;
" But in a ſieve I'll thither ſail,
" And like a cat without a tail,
" I'll do—I'll do—I'll do.
" *2d Witch.* I'll give thee a wind.
" *3d* —— Thou art kind.
" *1ſt* —— And I another.
" *3d Witch.* I myſelf have all the other,
" And the very points they blow,
" All the quarters that they know
" I' th' ſhipman's card.
" I will drain him dry as hay,
" Sleep ſhall neither night nor day
" Hang upon his pent-houſe lid;
" He ſhall live a man forbid;
" Weary ſev'n-nights nine times nine
" Shall he dwindle, peak and pine;

" Tho'

" Tho' his bark cannot be loſt,
" Yet it ſhall be tempeſt-toſt.
" Look, what I have.
" *2d Witch.* Shew me, ſhew me.
" *3d* —— Here I have a pilot's thumb,
" Wreckt as homeward he did come.
" *1ſt Witch.* A drum, a drum!
" Macbeth doth come.
" *All.* The weird ſiſters hand in hand,
" Poſters of the ſea and land,
" Thus do go about, about,
" Thrice to thine and thrice to mine,
" And thrice again to make up nine.
" Peace! the charm's wound up."

JONSON.

" *Dame.* Well done, my hags!——
" But firſt relate me what you have ſought,
" Where you have been and what you have brought.
" *1ſt Hag.* I have been all day looking after
" A raven feeding upon a quarter;
" And ſoon as ſhe turn'd her beak to the ſouth,
" I ſnatcht this morſel out of her mouth.
" *2d Hag.* I laſt night lay all alone
" O' th' ground to hear the mandrake grone,
" And pluckt him up, tho' he grew full low,
" And as I had done the cock did crow.
" *6th Hag.* I had a dagger; what did I with that?
" Kill'd an infant, to have his fat;
" A piper it got at a church-ale,
" I bade him again blow wind in it's tail.

" *7th Hag.*

" *7th Hag.* A murderer yonder was hung in
" chains,
" The ſun and the wind had ſhrunk his veins;
" I bit off a ſinew, I clipt his hair,
" I brought off his rags that danc'd in the air.
" *8th Hag.* The ſcrich-owl's eggs and the feathers
" black,
" The blood of the frog, and the bone in his back,
" I have been getting, and made of his ſkin
" A purſet to keep *Sir Cranion* in.
" *9th Hag.* And I ha' been plucking (plants among)
" Hemlock, henbane, adder's tongue,
" Night-ſhade, moon-wort, libbard's-bane,
" And twice by the dogs was like to be ta'en.
" *11th Hag.* I went to the toad, breeds under the
" wall,
" I charm'd him out, and he came at my call,
" I ſcratcht out the eyes of the owl before,
" I tore the bat's wing—What wou'd you have more?"

Dame. Yes, I have brought (to help our vows)
Horned poppy, cypreſs boughs,
The fig-tree wild, that grows on tombs,
And juice that from the larch-tree comes,
The baſiliſk's blood, and the viper's ſkin—
And now our orgies let's begin!

SHAKESPEAR's *Charm.*

" *1ſt Witch.* Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.
" *2d* —— Twice and once the hedge-pig whin'd.
" *3d* —— Harper cries, 'tis time, 'tis time!
" *1ſt* —— Round about the cauldron go,
" In the poiſon'd entrails throw.

" —Toad,

" ——Toad, that under the cold ſtone
" Days and nights has thirty-one
" Swelter'd venom ſleeping got,
" Boil thou firſt i' th' charmed pot.
" *All.* Double, double, toil and trouble,
" Fire burn and cauldron bubble!
" *2d Witch.* Fillet of a fenny ſnake
" In the cauldron boil and bake;
" Eye of newt and toe of frog,
" Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
" Adder's fork and blind-worm's ſting,
" Lizard's leg and owlet's wing,
" For a charm of powerful trouble,
" Like a hell-broth, boil and bubble!
" *All.* Double, double, toil and trouble,
" Fire burn and cauldron bubble!
" *3d Witch.* Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
" Witch's mummy, maw and gulf
" Of the ravening ſalt-ſea ſhark,
" Root of hemlock, digg'd i'th' dark;
" Liver of blaſpheming Jew,
" Gall of goat, and ſlips of yew
" Sliver'd in the moon's eclipſe,
" Noſe of Turk and Tartar's lips,
" Finger of birth-ſtrangled babe,
" Ditch-deliver'd of a drab,
" Make the gruel thick and ſlab;
" Add thereto a tyger's chawdron
" For th' ingredients of our cauldron.
" *All.* Double, double, toil and trouble,
" Fire burn and cauldron bubble!
" *1ſt Witch.* Cool it with a baboon's blood—
" Then the charm is firm and good."

JONSON's

JONSON's *Charm.*

" The owl is abroad, the bat and the toad,
" And ſo is the cat-a-mountain,
" The ant and the mole ſit both in a hole,
" And frog peeps out of the fountain.
" The dogs they do bay and the timbrels play,
" The ſpindle is now a-turning,
" The moon it is red and the ſtars are fled,
" And all the ſky is a burning.

2d Charm.

" Deep, oh deep, we lay thee to ſleep,
" We leave thee drink by, if thou chance to be dry,
" Both milk and blood, the dew and the flood.
" We breathe in thy bed, at the foot and the head;
" We cover thee warm, that thou take no harm,
" And when thou doſt wake, dame earth ſhall
" quake, &c.

3d Charm.

" A cloud of pitch, a ſpur and a ſwitch,
" To haſte him away, and a whirlwind play
" Before and after, with thunder for laughter,
" And ſtorms of joy, of the roaring boy,
" His head of a drake, his tail of a ſnake.

4th Charm.

" About, about and about!
" Till the miſts ariſe and the lights fly out;

" The

" The images neither be ſeen nor felt,
" The woollen burn and the waxen melt;
" Sprinkle your liquors upon the ground,
" And into the air: Around, around!
" Around, around!
" Around, around!
" Till a muſic ſound,
" And the pace be found
" To which we may dance
" And our charms advance."

I ſhould obſerve that theſe quotations from Jonſon are ſelected partially and not given in continuation, as they are to be found in the Maſque, which is much too long to be given entire: They are accompanied with a commentary by the author, full of dæmonological learning, which was a very courtly ſtudy in the time of James the firſt, who was an author in that branch of ſuperſtitious pedantry.

I am aware there is little to gratify the reader's curioſity in theſe extracts, and ſtill leſs to diſtract his judgment in deciding between them: They are ſo far curious however as they ſhew how ſtrongly the characters

racters of the poets are diſtinguiſhed even in theſe fantaſtic ſpecimens; Jonſon dwells upon authorities without fancy, Shakeſpear employs fancy and creates authorities.

No. LXXV.

Uſus vetuſto genere, ſed rebus novis.
PROLOG. PHÆD. FAB. lib. v.

BEN JONSON in his prologue to the comedy of *The Fox* ſays that he wrote it in the ſhort ſpace of five weeks, his words are——

To theſe there needs no lie but this his creature,
Which was two months ſince no feature;
And tho' he dares give them five lives to mend it,
'Tis known five weeks fully penn'd it.

This he delivers in his uſual vaunting ſtile, ſpurning at the critics and detractors of his day, who thought to convict him of dulneſs by teſtifying in fact to his diligence. The magic movements of Shakeſpear's muſe had been ſo noted and applauded for their ſurpriſing rapidity, that the public had contracted

tracted a very ridiculous reſpect for haſty productions in general, and thought there could be no better teſt of a poet's genius, than the diſpatch and facility with which he wrote; Jonſon therefore affects to mark his contempt of the public judgment for applauding haſty writers, in the couplet preceding thoſe above quoted—

And when his plays come out, think they can flout 'em
With ſaying, He was a year about them.

But at the ſame time that he ſhews this contempt very juſtly, he certainly betrays a degree of weakneſs in boaſting of his poetical diſpatch, and ſeems to forget that he had noted Shakeſpear with ſomething leſs than friendly cenſure, for the very quality he is vaunting himſelf upon.

Several comic poets ſince his age have ſeemed to pride themſelves on the little time they expended on their productions; ſome have had the artifice to hook it in as an excuſe for their errors, but it is no leſs evident what ſhare vanity has in all ſuch apologies: Wycherley is an inſtance amongſt theſe, and Congreve tells of his expedition in writing the *Old Bachelor*, yet the ſame man

man afterwards, in his letter to Mr. Dryden, pompouſly pronounces, that to write one perfect comedy ſhould be the labour of one entire life, produced from a concentration of talents which hardly ever met in any human perſon.

After all it will be confeſſed, that the production of ſuch a drama as *The Fox*, in the ſpace of five weeks, is a very wonderful performance; for it muſt on all hands be conſidered as the maſter-piece of a very capital artiſt, a work, that bears the ſtamp of elaborate deſign, a ſtrong and frequently a ſublime vein of poetry, much ſterling wit, comic humour, happy character, moral ſatire, and unrivalled erudition; a work—

Quod non imber edax, non aquilo impotens
Poſſit diruere, aut innumerabilis
Annorum ſeries et fuga temporum.

In this drama the learned reader will find himſelf for ever treading upon claſſic ground; the foot of the poet it ſo fitted and familiarized to the Grecian ſock, that he wears it not with the awkwardneſs of an imitator, but with all the eaſy confidence and authoritative air of a privileged Athenian: Excluſive

ſive of Ariſtophanes, in whoſe volume he is perfect, it is plain that even the gleanings and broken fragments of the Greek ſtage had not eſcaped him; in the very firſt ſpeech of Volpone's, which opens the comedy, and in which he rapturouſly addreſſes himſelf to his treaſure, he is to be traced moſt decidedly in the fragments of Menander, Sophocles and Euripides, in Theognis and in Heſiod, not to mention Horace. To follow him through every one would be tedious, and therefore I will give a ſample of one paſſage only; Volpone is ſpeaking to his gold—

Thou being the beſt of things and far tranſcending
All ſtile of joy in children, parents, friends—
Thy looks when they to Venus did aſcribe,
They ſhould have given her twenty thouſand Cupids,
Such are thy beauties and our loves—

Let the curious reader compare this with the following fragment of Euripides's Bellerophon and he will find it almoſt a tranſlation.

Ὦ χρυσὲ δεξίωμα κάλλιστον βροτοῖς,
Ὡς ἡδὲ μήτηρ ἡδονὰς τόιας ἔχει,
Οὐ παῖδες ἀνθρώποισιν, οὐ φίλος πατήρ.
Εἰ δ' ἡ Κύπρις τοιοῦτον ὀφθαλμοῖς ὁρᾷ,
Οὐ θαῦμ' ἔρωτας μυρίους αὐτὴν τρέφειν.

Cicero made a ſelection of paſſages from the Greek dramatic authors, which he turned into Latin verſe for the purpoſe of applying them, as occaſion ſhould offer, either in his writings or pleadings, and our learned countryman ſeems on his part to have made the whole circle of Greek and Roman poets his own, and naturalized them to our ſtage. If any learned man would employ his leiſure in following his alluſions through this comedy only, I ſhould think it would be no unentertaining taſk.

The Fox is indubitably the beſt production of it's author, and in ſome points of ſubſtantial merit yields to nothing, which the Engliſh ſtage can oppoſe to it; there is a bold and happy ſpirit in the fable, it is of moral tendency, female chaſtity and honour are beautifully diſplayed, and puniſhment is inflicted on the delinquents of the drama with ſtrict and exemplary juſtice: The characters of the *Hæredipetæ*, depicted under the titles of birds of prey, *Voltore*, *Corbaccio* and *Corvino*, are warmly coloured, happily contraſted, and faithfully ſupported from the outſet to the end: *Volpone*, who gives his name to the piece, with a fox-like craftineſs deludes

deludes and gulls their hopes by the agency of his inimitable Paraſite, or (as the Greek and Roman authors expreſſed it) by his *Fly*, his *Moſca*; and in this finiſhed portrait Jonſon may throw the gauntlet to the greateſt maſters of antiquity; the character is of claſſic origin; it is found with the contemporaries of Ariſtophanes, though not in any comedy of his now exiſting; the Middle Dramatiſts ſeem to have handled it very frequently, and in the New Comedy it rarely failed to find a place; Plautus has it again and again, but the aggregate merit of all his Paraſites will not weigh in the ſcale againſt this ſingle *Fly* of our poet: The incident of his concealing *Bonario* in the gallery, from whence he breaks in upon the ſcene to the reſcue of Celia and the detection of *Volpone*, is one of the happieſt contrivances, which could poſſibly be deviſed, becauſe, at the ſame time that it produces the cataſtrophe, it does not ſacrifice *Moſca*'s character in the manner moſt villains are ſacrificed in comedy, by making them commit blunders, which do not correſpond with the addreſs their firſt repreſentation exhibits, and which the audience has a right to expect

from them throughout, of which the *Double Dealer* is amongſt others a notable inſtance. But this incident of *Bonario*'s interference does not only not impeach the adroitneſs of the Paraſite, but it furniſhes a very brilliant occaſion for ſetting off his ready invention and preſence of mind in a new and ſuperior light, and ſerves to introduce the whole machinery of the trial and condemnation of the innocent perſons before the court of *Advocates:* In this part of the fable the contrivance is inimitable, and here the poet's art is a ſtudy, which every votariſt of the dramatic muſes ought to pay attention and reſpect to; had the ſame addreſs been exerted throughout, the conſtruction would have been a matchleſs piece of art, but here we are to lament the haſte of which he boaſts in his prologue, and that rapidity of compoſition, which he appeals to as a mark of genius, is to be lamented as the probable cauſe of incorrectneſs, or at leaſt the beſt and moſt candid plea in excuſe of it: For who can deny that nature is violated by the abſurdity of *Volpone*'s unſeaſonable inſults to the very perſons, who had witneſſed falſely in his defence, and even to the very

Advocate,

Advocate, who had ſo ſucceſsfully defended him? Is it in character for a man of his deep cunning and long reach of thought to provoke thoſe, on whom his all depended, to retaliate upon him, and this for the poor triumph of a ſilly jeſt? Certainly this is a glaring defect, which every body muſt lament, and which can eſcape nobody. The poet himſelf knew the weak part of his plot, and vainly ſtrives to bolſter it up by making *Volpone* exclaim againſt his own folly—

I am caught in my own nooſe—

And again—

To make a ſnare for mine own neck, and run
My head into it wilfully with laughter!
When I had newly 'ſcap'd, was free and clear,
Out of mere wantonneſs! Oh, the dull devil
Was in this brain of mine, when I devis'd it,
And Moſca gave it ſecond——
—— Theſe are my fine conceits!
I muſt be merry, with a miſchief to me!
What a vile wretch was I, that could not bear
My fortune ſoberly! I muſt have my crochets,
And my conundrums!——

It is with regret I feel myſelf compelled to proteſt againſt ſo pleaſant an epiſode, as

that which is carried on by *Sir Politic Wou'd-be* and *Peregrine*, which in fact produces a kind of double plot and cataſtrophe; this is an imperfection in the fable, which criticiſm cannot overlook, but *Sir Politic* is altogether ſo delightful a fellow, that it is impoſſible to give a vote for his excluſion; the moſt that can be done againſt him, is to lament that he has not more relation to the main buſineſs of the fable.

The judgment pronounced upon the criminals in the concluſion of the play is ſo juſt and ſolemn, that I muſt think the poet has made a wanton breach of character, and gained but a ſorry jeſt by the bargain, when he violates the dignity of his court of judges by making one of them ſo abject in his flattery to the Paraſite upon the idea of matching him with his daughter, when he hears that Volpone has made him his heir; but this is an objection, that lies within the compaſs of two ſhort lines, ſpoken aſide from the bench, and may eaſily be remedied by their omiſſion in repreſentation; it is one only, and that a very ſlight one, amongſt thoſe venial blemiſhes—

—*quas incuria fudit.*

It

It does not occur to me that any other remark is left for me to make upon this celebrated drama, that could convey the ſlighteſt cenſure; but very many might be made in the higheſt ſtrain of commendation, if there was need of any more than general teſtimony to ſuch acknowledged merit. *The Fox* is a drama of ſo peculiar a ſpecies, that it cannot be dragged into a compariſon with the production of any other modern poet whatſoever; it's conſtruction is ſo diſſimilar from any thing of Shakeſpear's writing, that it would be going greatly out of our way, and a very groſs abuſe of criticiſm to attempt to ſettle the relative degrees of merit, where the characters of the writers are ſo widely oppoſite: In one we may reſpect the profundity of learning, in the other we muſt admire the ſublimity of genius; to one we pay the tribute of underſtanding, to the other we ſurrender up the poſſeſſion of our hearts; Shakeſpear with ten thouſand ſpots about him dazzles us with ſo bright a luſtre, that we either cannot or will not ſee his faults; he gleams and flaſhes like a meteor, which ſhoots out of our ſight before the eye can meaſure it's proportions, or analyſe it's

properties—but Jonſon ſtands ſtill to be ſurveyed, and preſents ſo bold a front, and levels it ſo fully to our view, as ſeems to challenge the compaſs and the rule of the critic, and defy him to find out an error in the ſcale and compoſition of his ſtructure.

Putting aſide therefore any further mention of Shakeſpear, who was a poet out of all rule, and beyond all compaſs of criticiſm, one whoſe excellencies are above compariſon, and his errors beyond number, I will venture an opinion that this drama of *The Fox* is, critically ſpeaking, the neareſt to perfection of any one drama, comic or tragic, which the Engliſh ſtage is at this day in poſſeſſion of.

No. LXXVI.

IN my foregoing paper, when I remarked that Jonſon in his comedy of *The Fox* was a cloſe copier of the antients, it occurred to me to ſay ſomething upon the celebrated drama of *The Sampſon Agoniſtes*, which, though leſs beholden to the Greek poets

poets in it's dialogue than the comedy above-mentioned, is in all other particulars as compleat an imitation of the Antient Tragedy, as the diſtance of times and the difference of languages will admit of.

It is profeſſedly *built according to antient rule and example*, and the author, by taking Ariſtotle's definition of tragedy for his motto, fairly challenges the critic to examine and compare it by that teſt. His cloſe adherence to the model of the Greek tragedy is in nothing more conſpicuous than in the ſimplicity of his diction; in this particular he has curbed his fancy with ſo tight a hand, that, knowing as we do the fertile vein of his genius, we cannot but lament the fidelity of his imitation; for there is a harſhneſs in the metre of his Chorus, which to a certain degree ſeems to border upon pedantry and affectation; he premiſes that *the meaſure is indeed of all ſorts*, but I muſt take leave to obſerve that in ſome places it is no meaſure at all, or ſuch at leaſt as the ear will not patiently endure, nor which any recitation can make harmonious. By caſting out of his compoſition the ſtrophe and ant ſtrophe, thoſe ſtanzas which the Greeks appropriated

to ſinging, or in one word by making his Chorus monoſtrophic, he has robbed it of that lyric beauty, which he was capable of beſtowing in the higheſt perfection; and why he ſhould ſtop ſhort in this particular, when he had otherwiſe gone ſo far in imitation, is not eaſy to gueſs; for ſurely it would have been quite as natural to ſuppoſe thoſe ſtanzas, had he written any, might be ſung, as that all the other parts, as the drama now ſtands with a Chorus of ſuch irregular meaſure, might be recited or given in repreſentation.

Now it is well known to every man converſant in the Greek theatre, how the Chorus, which in fact is the parent of the drama, came in proceſs of improvement to be woven into the fable, and from being at firſt the whole, grew in time to be only a part: The fable being ſimple, and the characters few, the ſtriking part of the ſpectacle reſted upon the ſinging and dancing of the interlude, if I may ſo call it, and to theſe the people were too long accuſtomed and too warmly atached, to allow of any reform for their excluſion; the tragic poet therefore never got rid of his Chorus, though

the

the writers of the Middle Comedy contrived to diſmiſs their's, and probably their fable being of a more lively character, their ſcenes were better able to ſtand without the ſupport of muſic and ſpectacle, than the mournful fable and more languid recitation of the tragedians. That the tragic authors laboured againſt the Chorus will appear from their efforts to expel Bacchus and his Satyrs from the ſtage, in which they were long time oppoſed by the audience, and at laſt by certain ingenious expedients, which were a kind of compromiſe with the public, effected their point: This in part was brought about by the introduction of a fuller ſcene and a more active fable, but the Chorus with it's accompaniments kept it's place, and the poet, who ſeldom ventured upon introducing more than three ſpeakers on the ſcene at the ſame time, qualified the ſterility of his buſineſs by giving to the Chorus a ſhare of the dialogue, who at the ſame time that they furniſhed the ſtage with numbers, were not counted amongſt the ſpeaking characters according to the rigour of the uſage above-mentioned. A man muſt be an enthuſiaſt for antiquity, who can find

charms in the dialogue-part of a Greek Chorus, and reconcile himſelf to their unnatural and chilling interruptions of the action and pathos of the ſcene: I am fully perſuaded they came there upon motives of expediency only, and kept their poſt upon the plea of long poſſeſſion, and the attractions of ſpectacle and muſic: In ſhort nature was ſacrificed to the diſplay of art, and the heart gave up it's feelings that the ear and eye might be gratified.

When Milton therefore takes the Chorus into his dialogue, excluding from his drama the lyric ſtrophe and antiſtrophe, he rejects what I conceive to be it's only recommendation, and which an elegant contemporary in his imitations of the Greek tragedy is more properly attentive to; at the ſame time it cannot be denied that Milton's Chorus ſubſcribes more to the dialogues, and harmonizes better with the buſineſs of the ſcene, than that of any Greek tragedy we can now refer to.

I would now proceed to a review of the performance itſelf, if it were not a diſcuſſion, which the author of *The Rambler* has very ably prevented me in; reſpect however

to

to an authority ſo high in criticiſm muſt not prevent me from obſerving, that, when he ſays—*This is the tragedy, which ignorance has admired and bigotry applauded*, he makes it meritorious in any future critic to attempt at following him over the ground he has trode, for the purpoſe of diſcovering what thoſe blemiſhes are, which he has found out by ſuperior ſagacity, and which others have ſo palpably overlooked, as to merit the diſgraceful character of *ignorance and bigotry*.

The principal, and in effect the only, objection, which he ſtates, is that *the poem wants a middle, ſince nothing paſſes between the firſt act and the laſt, that either haſtens or delays the death of Sampſon*. This demands examination: The death of Sampſon I need not deſcribe; it is a ſudden, momentary event; what can haſten or delay it, but the will of the perſon, who by an exertion of miraculous ſtrength was to bury himſelf under the ruins of a ſtructure, in which his enemies were aſſembled? To determine that will depends upon the impulſe of his own ſpirit, or it may be upon the inſpiration of Heaven: If there are any incidents in the body of the drama, which lead to this determination,

and

and indicate an impulſe, either natural or præternatural, ſuch muſt be called leading incidents, and thoſe leading incidents will conſtitute a middle, or in more diffuſive terms the middle buſineſs of the drama. Manoah in his interview with Sampſon, which the author of the Rambler denominates the ſecond act of the tragedy, tells him

This day the Philiſtines a popular feaſt
Here celebrate in Gaza, and proclaim
Great pomp and ſacrifice and praiſes loud
To Dagon, as their God—

Here is information of a meeting of his enemies to celebrate their idolatrous triumphs; an incident of juſt provocation to the ſervant of the living God, an opportunity perhaps for vengeance, either human or divine; if it paſſes without notice from Sampſon, it is not to be ſtiled an incident, if on the contrary he remarks upon it, it muſt be one—but Sampſon replies

Dagon muſt ſtoop, and ſhall ere long receive
Such a diſcomfit, as ſhall quite deſpoil him
Of all theſe boaſted trophies won on me,
And with confuſion blank his worſhippers.

Who

Who will ſay the expectation is not here prepared for ſome cataſtrophe, we know not what, but awful it muſt be, for it is Sampſon which denounces the downfal of the idol, it is God who inſpires the denunciation; the criſis is important, for it is that which ſhall decide whether God or Dagon is to triumph, it is in the ſtrongeſt ſenſe of the expreſſion —*dignus vindice nodus*—and therefore we may boldly pronounce *Deus interſit!*

That this interpretation meets the ſenſe of the author is clear from the remark of Manoah, who is made to ſay that *he receives theſe words as a prophecy*. Prophetic they are, and were meant to be by the poet, who in this uſe of his ſacred prophecy imitates the heathen oracles, on which ſeveral of their dramatic plots are conſtructed, as might be ſhewn by obvious examples. The interview with Manoah then is conducive to the cataſtrophe, and the drama is not in this ſcene devoid of incident.

Dalilah next appears, and if whatever tends to raiſe our intereſt in the leading character of the tragedy, cannot rightly be called epiſodical, the introduction of this perſon ought not to be accounted ſuch, for who but

but this perſon is the cauſe and origin of all the pathos and diſtreſs of the ſtory? The dialogue of this ſcene is moral, affecting and ſublime; it is alſo ſtrictly characteriſtic.

The next ſcene exhibits the tremendous giant Harapha, and the contraſt thereby produced is amongſt the beauties of the poem, and may of itſelf be termed an important incident: That it leads to the cataſtrophe I think will not be diſputed, and if it is aſked in what manner, the Chorus will ſupply us with an anſwer—

He will directly to the Lords I fear,
And with malicious counſel ſtir them up
Some way or other further to afflict thee.

Here is another prediction connected with the plot and verified by it's cataſtrophe, for Sampſon is commanded to come to the feſtival and entertain the revellers with ſome feats of ſtrength: Theſe commands he reſiſts, but obeys an impulſe of his mind by going afterwards, and thereby fulfils the prophetic declaration he had made to his father in the ſecond act. What incident can ſhew more management and addreſs in the poet, than this of Sampſon's refuſing the ſummons

mons of the idolaters and obeying the visitation of God's spirit.

And now I may confidently appeal to the judicious reader, whether the *Sampson Agonistes* is so void of incident between the opening and conclusion as fairly to be pronounced *to want a middle.* Simple it is from first to last, simple perhaps to a degree of coldness in some of it's parts, but to say that nothing passes between the first act and the last, *which hastens or delays the death of Sampson,* is not correct, because the very incidents are to be found, which conduce to the catastrophe, and but for which it could not have come to pass.

The author of the Rambler professes to examine *The Sampson Agonistes* according to the rule laid down by Aristotle for the disposition and perfection of a tragedy, and this rule he informs us is that it should have *a beginning, a middle, and an end.* And is this the mighty purpose for which the authority of Aristotle is appealed to? If it be thus the author of the Rambler has read *The Poetics,* and this be the best rule he can collect from that treatise, I am afraid he will find it too short a measure for the poet he is examining,

examining, or the critic he is quoting. Ariſtotle had ſaid *that every whole hath not amplitude enough for the conſtruction of a tragic fable*; *now by a whole*, (adds he in the way of illuſtration) *I mean that, which hath beginning, middle, and end.* This and no more is what he ſays upon beginning, middle and end; and this, which the author of the Rambler conceives to be a rule for tragedy, turns out to be merely an explanation of the word *whole*, which is only one term amongſt many employed by the critic in his profeſſed and compleat definition of tragedy. I ſhould add that Ariſtotle gives a further explanation of the terms, beginning, middle and end, which the author of the Rambler hath turned into Engliſh, but in ſo doing he hath inexcuſably turned them out of their original ſenſe as well as language; as any curious critic may be convinced of, who compares them with Ariſtotle's words in the eighth chapter of the *Poetics*.

Of the poetic diction of *The Sampſon Agoniſtes* I have already ſpoken in general; to particularize paſſages of ſtriking beauty would draw me into too great length; at the ſame time, not to paſs over ſo pleaſing a part

part of my undertaking in abſolute ſilence, I will give the following reply of Sampſon to the Chorus—

Wherever fountain or freſh current flow'd
Againſt the eaſtern ray, tranſlucent, pure
With touch ethereal of heaven's fiery rod,
I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying
Thirſt, and refreſh'd; nor envy'd them the grape,
Whoſe heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

Of the character I may ſay in few words, that Sampſon poſſeſſes all the terrific majeſty of *Prometheus chained*, the myſterious diſtreſs of *Oedipus*, and the pitiable wretchedneſs of *Philoctetes*. His properties, like thoſe of the firſt, are ſomething above human; his misfortunes, like thoſe of the ſecond, are derivable from the diſpleaſure of heaven, and involved in oracles; his condition, like that of the laſt, is the moſt abject, which human nature can be reduced to from a ſtate of dignity and ſplendor.

Of the cataſtrophe there remains only to remark, that it is of unparalleled majeſty and terror.

No. LXXVII.

DR. Samuel Johnſon, in his life of Rowe, pronounces of *The Fair Penitent*, *that it is one of the moſt pleaſing tragedies on the ſtage, where it ſtill keeps its turns of appearing, and probably will long keep them, for that there is ſcarcely any work of any poet at once ſo intereſting by the fable, and ſo delightful by the language. The ſtory*, he obſerves, *is domeſtic, and therefore eaſily received by the imagination, and aſſimilated to common life; the diction is exquiſitely harmonious, and ſoft or ſprightly as occaſion requires.* Few people, I believe, will think this character of *The Fair Penitent* too laviſh on the ſcore of commendation; the high degree of public favour in which this tragedy has long ſtood, has ever attracted the beſt audiences to it, and engaged the talents of the beſt performers in its diſplay. As there is no drama more frequently exhibited, or more generally read, I propoſe to give it a fair and impartial examination, jointly with the more unknown and

and leſs popular tragedy from which it is derived.

The Fair Penitent is in fable and character ſo cloſely copied from *The Fatal Dowry*, that it is impoſſible not to take that tragedy along with it; and it is matter of ſome ſurprize to me that Rowe ſhould have made no acknowledgment of his imitation either in his dedication or prologue, or any where elſe that I am appriſed of.

This tragedy of *The Fatal Dowry* was the joint production of Maſſinger and Nathaniel Field; it takes a wider compaſs of fable than *The Fair Penitent*, by which means it preſents a very affecting ſcene at the opening, which diſcovers young Charalois attended by his friend Romont, waiting with a petition in his hand to be preſented to the judges, when they ſhall meet, praying the releaſe of his dead father's body, which had been ſeized by his creditors, and detained in their hands for debts he had incurred in the public ſervice, as Field Marſhal of the armies of Burgundy. Maſſinger, to whoſe ſhare this part of the tragedy devolved, has managed this pathetic introduction with conſummate ſkill and great expreſſion

expreſſion of nature; a noble youth in the laſt ſtate of worldly diſtreſs, reduced to the humiliating yet pious office of ſoliciting an unfeeling and unfriendly judge to allow him to pay the ſolemn rites of burial to the remains of an illuſtrious father, who had fought his country's battles with glory, and had ſacrificed life and fortune in defence of an ingrateful ſtate, impreſſes the ſpectators mind with pity and reſpect, which are felt through every paſſage of the play: One thing in particular ſtrikes me at the opening of the ſcene, which is the long ſilence that the poet has artfully impoſed upon his principal character (Charalois) who ſtands in mute ſorrow with his petition in his hand, whilſt his friend Romont, and his advocate Charmi, urge him to preſent himſelf to the judges, and ſolicit them in perſon: The judges now make their entrance, they ſtop upon the ſtage; they offer him the faireſt opportunity for tendering his petition and ſoliciting his ſuit: Charalois remains fixed and ſpeechleſs; Romont, who is all eagerneſs in his cauſe, preſſes him again and again—

Now put on your ſpirits—
Now, Sir, loſe not this offered means: Their looks
Fix'd on you with a pitying earneſtneſs,
Invites you to demand their furtherance
To your good purpoſe.

The judges point him out to each other; they lament the misfortunes of his noble houſe; they obſerve,

It is young Charalois
Son to the Marſhal, from whom he inherits
His fame and virtues only.
Romont. *Hah! They name you.*
Dulroy. *His father died in priſon two days ſince.*
Rochfort. *Yes, to the ſhame of this ingrateful ſtate,*
That ſuch a maſter in the art of war,
So noble and ſo highly meriting
From this forgetful country, ſhould, for want
Of means to ſatisfy his creditors
The ſum he took up for the general good,
Meet with an end ſo infamous.
Romont. *Dare you ever hope for like opportunity?*

It is in vain; the opportunity paſſes off, and Charalois opens not his mouth, nor even ſilently tenders his petition.

I have, upon a former occaſion, both generally and particularly obſerved upon the effects of dramatic ſilence; the ſtage cannot afford a more beautiful and touching in-

ſtance than this before us: To ſay it is not inferior to the ſilence of Hamlet upon his firſt appearance, would be ſaying too little in its favour. I have no doubt but Maſſinger had this very caſe in his thoughts, and I honour him no leſs for the imitating, than I ſhould have done for ſtriking out a ſilence ſo naturally and ſo delicately preſerved. What could Charalois have uttered to give him that intereſt in the hearts of his ſpectators, which their own concluſions during his affecting ſilence have already impreſſed? No ſooner are the judges gone, than the ardent Romont again breaks forth—

This obſtinate ſpleen
You think becomes your ſorrow, and ſorts well
With your black ſuits.

This is Hamlet himſelf, his *inky cloak*, and *cuſtomary ſuits of ſolemn black*. The character of Charalois is thus fixed before he ſpeaks; the poet's art has given the prejudice that is to bear him in our affections through all the ſucceeding events of the fable; and a ſtriking contraſt is eſtabliſhed between the undiſcerning fiery zeal of Romont,

mont, and Charalois' fine ſenſibility and high-born dignity of ſoul.

A more methodical and regular dramatiſt would have ſtopped here, ſatisfied that the impreſſion already made was fully ſufficient for all the purpoſes of his plot; but Maſſinger, according to the buſy ſpirit of the ſtage for which he wrote, is not alarmed by a throng of incidents, and proceeds to open the court and diſcuſs the pleadings on the ſtage: The advocate Charmi in a ſet harangue moves the judges for diſpenſing with the rigour of the law in favour of creditors, and for reſcuing the Marſhal's corpſe out of their clutches; he is brow-beaten and ſilenced by the preſiding judge old Novall: The plea is then taken up by the impetuous Romont, and urged with ſo much perſonal inſolence, that he is arreſted on the ſpot, put in charge of the officers of the court, and taken to priſon. This is a very ſtriking mode of introducing the ſet oration of Charalois; a ſon recounting the military atchievments of a newly deceaſed father, and imploring mercy from his creditors and the law towards his unburied remains, now claims the attention of the

court, who had been hitherto unmoved by the feeble formality of a hired pleader, and the turbulent paſſion of an enraged ſoldier. Charalois' argument takes a middle courſe between both; the pious feelings of a ſon, tempered by the modeſt manners of a gentleman: The creditors however are implacable, the judge is hoſtile, and the law muſt take its courſe.

Creditor. *'Tis the city's doctrine:*
We ſtand bound to maintain it.
Charalois. *Be conſtant in it;*
And ſince you are as mercileſs in your natures,
As baſe and mercenary in your means
By which you get your wealth, I will not urge
The court to take away one ſcruple from
The right of their laws, or one good thought
In you to mend your diſpoſition with.
I know there is no muſic in your ears
So pleaſing as the groans of men in priſon,
And that the tears of widows, and the cries
Of famiſh'd orphans, are the feaſts that take you:
That to be in your danger with more care
Should be avoided than infectious air,
The loath'd embraces of diſeaſed women,
A flatterer's poiſon, or the loſs of honour.
Yet rather than my father's reverend duſt
Shall want a place in that fair monument,
In which our noble anceſtors lie entomb'd,
Before the court I offer up myſelf

A priſoner for it: Load me with thoſe irons
That have worn out his life; in my beſt ſtrength
I'll run to the encounter of cold hunger,
And chooſe my dwelling where no ſun dares enter,
So he may be releas'd.

There was yet another incident, which the poet's paſſion for buſineſs and ſpectacle induced him to avail himſelf of, viz. the funeral of the Marſhal; this he diſplays on the ſtage, with a train of captains and ſoldiers following the body of their general: Charalois and Romont, under cuſtody of their jailors, appear as chief mourners, and a party of creditors are concerned in the groupe.

After this ſolemnity is diſpatched, the poet proceeds to develop the amiable generoſity of old Rochfort, who, being touched with the gallant ſpirit of Romont, and ſtill more penetrated with the filial piety of young Charalois, delivers them both from impriſonment and diſtreſs, by diſcharging the debts of the Marſhal and diſmiſſing the creditors: This alſo paſſes before the eyes of the ſpectators. Before Charalois has given full expreſſion to his gratitude for this extraordinary benefaction, Rochfort follows it

with a further act of bounty, which he introduces in the ſtile of a requeſt—

Call in my daughter—Still I have a ſuit to you,
Would you requite me—
This is my only child.

Beaumelle, Rochfort's daughter, is preſented to Charalois; the ſcene is hurried on with a precipitation almoſt without example: Charalois aſks the lady,

Fair Beaumelle, can you love me?
Beaumelle. *Yes, my lord.*
Charalois. *You need not queſtion me if I can you:*
You are the faireſt virgin in Dijon,
And Rochfort is your father.

The match is agreed upon as ſoon as propoſed, and Rochfort haſtens away to prepare the celebration.

In this cluſter of incidents I muſt not fail to remark, that the poet introduces young Novall upon the ſcene, in the very moment when the ſhort dialogue above quoted was paſſing: This Novall had before been exhibited as a ſuitor to Beaumelle, and his vain frivolous character had been diſplayed in a very ridiculous and contemptible

temptible light; he is now again introduced to be a witneſs of his own diſappointment, and his only obſervation upon it is—*What's this change?*—Upon the exit of the father however he addreſſes himſelf to the lady, and her reply gives the alarming hint, that makes diſcovery of the fatal turn which the plot is now about to take; for when Novall turning aſide to Beaumelle, by one word—*Miſtreſs!*—conveys the reproach of inconſtancy, ſhe replies,

Oh, Servant! Virtue ſtrengthen me!
Thy preſence blows round my affection's vane:
You will undo me if you ſpeak again. (*Exit.*)

Young Novall is left on the ſcene with certain followers and dependants, which hang upon his fortune, one of which (Pontalier by name) a man under deep obligations to him, yet of an honeſt nature, adviſes him to an honourable renunciation of all further hopes or attempts to avail himſelf of the affections of Beaumelle—

Tho' you have ſav'd my life,
Reſcu'd me often from my wants, I muſt not
Wink at your follies, that will ruin you.

You know my blunt way, and my love to truth:
Forſake the purſuit of this lady's honour,
Now you do ſee her made another man's.

This honourable advice is rejected with contempt: Novall, in whoſe mean boſom there does not ſeem a trace of virtue, avows a determined perſeverance; and the poet having in this haſty manner compleated theſe inauſpicious nuptials, cloſes the ſecond act of his tragedy.

No. LXXVIII.

We have now expended two entire acts of *The Fatal Dowry*, in advancing to that period in the fable, at which the tragedy of *The Fair Penitent* opens. If the author of this tragedy thought it neceſſary to contract Maſſinger's plot, and found one upon it of a more regular conſtruction, I know not how he could do this any otherwiſe, than by taking up the ſtory at the point where we have now left it, and throwing the antecedent matter into narration; and though theſe two prefatory acts are full of

of very affecting incidents, yet the pathos which properly appertains to the plot, and conduces to the cataſtrophe of the tragedy, does not in ſtrictneſs take place before the event of the marriage. No critic will ſay that the pleadings before the judges, the interference of the creditors, the diſtreſſes of Charalois, or the funeral of the Marſhal, are neceſſary parts of the drama; at the ſame time no reader will deny (and neither could Rowe himſelf overlook) the effect of theſe incidents: He could not fail to foreſee that he was to ſacrifice very much of the intereſt of his fable, when he was to throw that upon narration, which his original had given in ſpectacle; and the loſs was more enhanced by falling upon the hero of the drama; for who that compares Charalois, at the end of the ſecond act of Maſſinger, with Rowe's Altamont at the opening ſcene of *The Fair Penitent*, can doubt which character has moſt intereſt with the ſpectators? We have ſeen the former in all the moſt amiable offices which filial piety could perform; enduring inſults from his inveterate oppreſſors, and voluntarily ſurrendering himſelf to a priſon to ranſom the

dead body of his father from unrelenting creditors. Altamont preſents himſelf before us in his wedding ſuit, in the ſplendour of fortune, and at the ſummit of happineſs; he greets us with a burſt of exultation—

Let this auſpicious day be ever ſacred,
No mourning, no misfortunes happen on it;
Let it be mark'd for triumphs and rejoicings!
Let happy lovers ever make it holy,
Chooſe it to bleſs their hopes and crown their wiſhes;
This happy day, that gives me my Caliſta!

The reſt of the ſcene is employed by him and Horatio alternately in recounting the benefits conferred upon them by the generous Sciolto; and the very ſame incident of the ſeizure of his father's corpſe by the creditors, and his redemption of it, is recited by Horatio—

When his hard creditors,
Urg'd and aſſiſted by Lothario's father,
(Foe to thy houſe and rival of their greatneſs)
By ſentence of the cruel law forbade
His venerable corpſe to reſt in earth,
Thou gav'ſt thyſelf a ranſom for his bones;
With piety uncommon didſt give up
Thy hopeful youth to ſlaves, who ne'er knew mercy.

It

It is not however within the reach of this, or any other deſcription, to place Altamont in that intereſting and amiable light, as circumſtances have already placed Charalois; the happy and exulting bridegroom may be an object of our congratulation, but the virtuous and ſuffering Charalois engages our pity, love, and admiration. If Rowe would have his audience credit Altamont for that filial piety, which marks the character he copied from, it was a ſmall overſight to put the following expreſſion into his mouth—

Oh, great Sciolto! Oh, my more than father!

A cloſer attention to character would have reminded him that it was poſſible for Altamont to expreſs his gratitude to Sciolto without ſetting him above a father, to whoſe memory he had paid ſuch devotion.

From this contraction of his plot, by the defalcation of ſo many pathetic incidents, it became impoſſible for the author of the Fair Penitent to make his Altamont the hero of his tragedy, and the leading part is taken from him by Horatio, and even by

Lothario, throughout the drama. There are ſeveral other reaſons, which concur to ſink Altamont upon the compariſon with Charalois, the chief of which ariſes from the captivating colours in which Rowe has painted his libertine: On the contrary, Maſſinger gives a contemptible picture of his young Novall; he makes him not only vicious, but ridiculous; in foppery and impertinence he is the counterpart of Shakeſpear's Oſrick; vain-glorious, purſe-proud, and overbearing amongſt his dependants; a ſpiritleſs poltroon in his interview with Romont. *Lothario* (as Johnſon obſerves) *with gaiety which cannot be hated, and bravery which cannot be deſpiſed, retains too much of the ſpectator's kindneſs.* His high ſpirit, brilliant qualities, and fine perſon are ſo deſcribed, as to put us in danger of falſe impreſſions in his favour, and to ſet the paſſions in oppoſition to the moral of the piece: I ſuſpect that the gallantry of Lothario, makes more advocates for Caliſta than ſhe ought to have. There is another conſideration, which operates againſt Altamont, and it is an indelicacy in his character, which the poet ſhould have provided againſt:

againſt: He marries Caliſta with the full perſuaſion of her being averſe to the match; in his firſt meeting with Sciolto he ſays—

Oh! could I hope there was one thought of Altamont,
One kind remembrance in Caliſta's breaſt—
——I found her cold
As a dead lover's ſtatue on his tomb;
A riſing ſtorm of paſſion ſhook her breaſt,
Her eyes a piteous ſhower of tears let fall,
And then ſhe ſigh'd as if her heart were breaking.
With all the tendereſt eloquence of love
I begg'd to be a ſharer in her grief;
But ſhe, with looks averſe and eyes that froze me,
Sadly replied, her ſorrows were her own,
Nor in a father's power to diſpoſe of.

I am aware that Sciolto attempts to parry theſe facts, by an interpretation too groſs and unbecoming for a father's character, and only fit for the lips of a Lothario; but yet it is not in nature to ſuppoſe that Altamont could miſtake ſuch ſymptoms, and it fixes a meanneſs upon him, which prevails againſt his character throughout the play. Nothing of this ſort could be diſcovered by Maſſinger's bridegroom, for the ceremony was agreed upon and performed at the very firſt interview of the parties; Beaumelle gave a full and unreſerved aſſent, and

though her character ſuffers on the ſcore of hypocriſy on that account, yet Charalois is ſaved by it: Leſs hypocriſy appears in Caliſta, but hers is the deeper guilt, becauſe ſhe was already diſhonoured by Lothario, and Beaumelle's coquetry with Novall had not yet reached the length of criminality. Add to this, that Altamont appears in the contemptible light of a ſuitor, whom Caliſta had apprized of her averſion, and to whom ſhe had done a deliberate act of diſhonour, though his perſon and character muſt have been long known to her. The caſe is far otherwiſe between Charalois and Beaumelle, who never met before, and every care is taken by the poet to ſave his hero from ſuch a deliberate injury, as might convey contempt; with this view the marriage is precipitated; nothing is allowed to paſs, that might open the character of Charalois to Beaumelle: She is hurried into an aſſignation with Novall immediately upon her marriage; every artifice of ſeduction is employed by her confidante Bellaperte, and Aymer the paraſite of Novall, to make this meeting criminal; ſhe falls the victim of paſſion, and when detection brings her to a

ſenſe

ſenſe of her guilt, ſhe makes this penitent and pathetic appeal to Charalois—

Oh my fate!
That never would conſent that I ſhould ſee
How worthy thou wert both of love and duty
Before I loſt you; and my miſery made
The glaſs, in which I now behold your virtue——
With juſtice therefore you may cut me off,
And from your memory waſh the remembrance
That e'er I was; like to ſome vicious purpoſe,
Which in your better judgment you repent of,
And ſtudy to forget——
——Yet you ſhall find,
Tho' I was bold enough to be a ſtrumpet,
I dare not yet live one: Let thoſe fam'd matrons,
That are canoniz'd worthy of our ſex,
Tranſcend me in their ſanctity of life,
I yet will equal them in dying nobly,
Ambitious of no honour after life,
But that, when I am dead, you will forgive me.

Compare this with the conduct of Caliſta, and then decide which frail fair-one has the better title to the appellation of a *Penitent*, and which drama conveys the better moral by it's cataſtrophe.

There is indeed a groſſneſs in the older poet, which his more modern imitator has refined; but he has only ſweetened the poiſon, not removed its venom; nay, by how

how much more palatable he has made it, ſo much more pernicious it is become in his tempting ſparkling cup, than in the coarſe deterring doſe of Maſſinger.

Rowe has no doubt greatly outſtepped his original in the ſtriking character of Lothario, who leaves Novall as far behind him as Charalois does Altamont: It is admitted then that Caliſta has as good a plea as any wanton could wiſh, to urge for her criminality with Lothario, and the poet has not ſpared the ear of modeſty in his exaggerated deſcription of the guilty ſcene; every luxurious image, that his inflamed imagination could crowd into the glowing rhapſody, is there to be found, and the whole is recited in numbers ſo flowing and harmonious, that they not only arreſt the paſſions but the memory alſo, and perhaps have been, and ſtill can be, as generally repeated as any paſſage in Engliſh poetry. Maſſinger with leſs elegance, but not with leſs regard to decency, ſuffers the guilty act to paſs within the courſe of his drama; the greater refinement of manners in Rowe's day did not allow of this, and he anticipated the incident; but when he revived the recollec-

tion

tion of it by ſuch a ſtudied deſcription, he plainly ſhewed that it was not from moral principle that he omitted it; and if he has preſented his heroine to the ſpectators with more immediate delicacy during the compaſs of the play, he has at the ſame time given her greater depravity of mind; her manners may be more refined, but her principle is fouler than Beaumelle's. Caliſta, who yielded to the gallant gay Lothario, *hot with the Tuſcan grape*, might perhaps have diſdained a lover who addreſſed her in the holiday language which Novall uſes to Beaumelle—

Beſt day to Nature's curioſity!
Star of Dijon, the luſtre of all France!
Perpetual Spring dwell on thy roſy cheeks,
Whoſe breath is perfume to our continent;
See, Flora trimm'd in her varieties!——
No Autumn, nor no Age ever approach
This heavenly piece, which Nature having wrought,
She loſt her needle, and did then deſpair
Ever to work ſo lively and ſo fair.

The letter of Caliſta (which brings about the diſcovery by the poor expedient of Lothario's dropping it and Horatio's finding it) has not even the merit of being characteriſtically wicked, and is both in its matter

ter and mode below tragedy. It is *Lothario's cruelty has determined her to yield a perfect obedience to her father, and give her hand to Altamont, in ſpite of her weakneſs for the falſe Lothario.*—If the lady had given her *perfect obedience* it's true denomination, ſhe had called it a moſt diſhonourable compliance; and if we may take Lothario's word (who ſeems full correct enough in deſcribing facts and particulars) ſhe had not much cauſe to complain of his being falſe; for he tells Roſſano—

I lik'd her, would have marry'd her,
But that it pleas'd her father to refuſe me,
To make this honourable fool her huſband.

It appears by this that Lothario had not been *falſe* to her in the article of marriage, though he might have been *cruel* to her on the ſcore of paſſion, which indeed is confeſt on his part with as much *cold indifference*, as the moſt barefaced avowal could expreſs. —But to return to the letter: She proceeds to tell him—*that ſhe could almoſt wiſh ſhe had that heart, and that honour to beſtow with it, which he has robbed her of*—But leſt this half wiſh ſhould ſtartle him, ſhe adds—*But oh!*

oh! I fear, could I retrieve them, I ſhould again be undone by the too faithleſs, yet too lovely Lothario.—This muſt be owned as full a reaſon as ſhe could give why ſhe ſhould only *almoſt wiſh* for her loſt honour, when ſhe would make ſuch an uſe of it, if ſhe had it again at her diſpoſal. And yet the very next paragraph throws every thing into contradiction, for ſhe tells him—*this is the laſt weakneſs of her pen, and to-morrow ſhall be the laſt in which ſhe will indulge her eyes.* If ſhe could keep to that reſolution, I muſt think the recovery of her innocence would have been worth a whole wiſh, and many a wiſh; unleſs we are to ſuppoſe ſhe was ſo devoted to guilt, that ſhe could take delight in reflecting upon it: This is a ſtate of depravity, which human nature hardly ever attains, and ſeems peculiar to Caliſta. She now grows very humble, and concludes in a ſtile well ſuited to her humility—*Lucilla ſhall conduct you, if you are kind enough to let me ſee you; it ſhall be the laſt trouble you ſhall meet with from——The loſt Caliſta.*

It was very ill done of Horatio's curioſity to read this letter, and I muſt ever regret that he has ſo unhandſomely expoſed a lady's private correſpondence to the world.

No. LXXIX.

THOUGH the part which Horatio takes in the buſineſs of the drama, is exactly that which falls to the ſhare of Romont in the Fatal Dowry, yet their characters are of a very different caſt; for as Rowe had beſtowed the fire and impetuoſity of Romont upon his Lothario, it was a very judicious oppoſition to contraſt it with the cool deliberate courage of the ſententious Horatio, the friend and brother-in-law of Altamont.

When Horatio has read Caliſta's letter, which Lothario had dropped (an accident which more frequently happens to gentlemen in comedies than in tragedies) he falls into a very long meditation, and cloſes it with putting this queſtion to himſelf:

What if I give this paper to her father?
It follows that his juſtice dooms her dead,
And breaks his heart with ſorrow; hard retu n
For all the good his hand has heap'd on us!
Hold, let me take a moment's thought—

At this moment he is interrupted in his reflections by the preſence of Lavinia, whoſe tender

tender ſolicitude fills up the remaining part of the dialogue, and concludes the act without any deciſive reſolution on the part of Horatio; an incident well contrived, and introduced with much dramatic ſkill and effect: Though preſſed by his wife to diſcloſe the cauſe of his uneaſineſs, he does not impart to her the fatal diſcovery he has made; this alſo is well in character. Upon his next entrance he has withdrawn himſelf from the company, and being alone, reſumes his meditation—

What, if, while all are here intent on revelling,
I privately went forth and ſought Lothario?
This letter may be forg'd; perhaps the wantonneſs
Of his vain youth to ſtain a lady's fame;
Perhaps his malice to diſturb my friend.
Oh! no, my heart forebodes it muſt be true.
Methought e'en now I mark'd the ſtarts of guilt
That ſhook her ſoul, tho' damn'd diſſimulation
Screen'd her dark thoughts, and ſet to public view
A ſpecious face of innocence and beauty.

This ſoliloquy is ſucceeded by the much-admired and ſtriking ſcene between him and Lothario; rigid criticiſm might wiſh to abridge ſome of the ſententious declamatory ſpeeches of Horatio, and ſhorten the dialogue

dialogue to quicken the effect; but the moral ſentiment and harmonious verſification are much too charming to be treated as intruders, and the author has alſo ſtruck upon a natural expedient for prolonging the dialogue, without any violence to probability, by the interpoſition of Roſſano, who acts as a mediator between the hoſtile parties. This interpoſition is further neceſſary to prevent a deciſive rencounter, for which the fable is not ripe; neither would it be proper for Horatio to anticipate the revenge, which is reſerved for Altamont: The altercation therefore cloſes with a challenge from Lothario—

Weſt of the town a mile, amongſt the rocks,
Two hours ere noon to-morrow I expect thee;
Thy ſingle hand to mine.

The place of meeting is not well aſcertained, and the time is too long deferred for ſtrict probability; there are however certain things in all dramas, which muſt not be too rigidly inſiſted upon, and provided no extraordinary violence is done to reaſon and common ſenſe, the candid critic ought to let them paſs: This I take to be a caſe in point; and though Horatio's cool courage and ready preſence of mind, are not juſt the

qualities

qualities to reconcile us to ſuch an overſight, yet I ſee no reaſon to be ſevere upon the incident, which is followed by his immediate recollection—

Two hours ere noon to-morrow! Hah! Ere that
He ſees Caliſta.—Oh! unthinking fool!
What if I urg'd her with the crime and danger?
If any ſpark from Heav'n remain unquench'd
Within her breaſt, my breath perhaps may wake it.
Could I but proſper there, I would not doubt
My combat with that loud vain-glorious boaſter.

Whether this be a meaſure altogether in character with a man of Horatio's good ſenſe and diſcretion, I muſt own is matter of doubt with me. I think he appears fully ſatisfied of her actual criminality; and in that caſe it would be more natural for him to lay his meaſures for intercepting Lothario, and preventing the aſſignation, than to try his rhetoric in the preſent criſis upon the agitated mind of Caliſta. As it has juſtly occurred to him, that he has been over-reached by Lothario in the poſtponement of the duel, the meaſure I ſuggeſt would naturally tend to haſten that rencounter. Now, though the buſineſs of the drama may require an explanation between Horatio and Caliſta, whereupon to ground an

an occaſion for his intereſting quarrel with Altamont, yet I do not ſee any neceſſity to make that a premeditated explanation, nor to ſacrifice character by a meaſure that is inconſiſtent with the better judgment of Horatio. The poet, however, has decreed it otherwiſe, and a deliberate interview with Caliſta and Horatio accordingly takes place. This, although introduced with a ſolemn invocation on his part, is very clumſily conducted—

Teach me, ſome Power! that happy art of ſpeech
To dreſs my purpoſe up in gracious words,
Such as may ſoftly ſteal upon her ſoul,
And never waken the tempeſtuous paſſions.

Who can expect, after this preparation, to hear Horatio thus break his ſecret to Caliſta?

Lothario and Caliſta!—Thus they join
Two names, which Heav'n decreed ſhould never meet.
Hence have the talkers of this populous city
A ſhameful tale to tell for public ſport,
Of an unhappy beauty, a falſe fair-one,
Who plighted to a noble youth her faith,
When ſhe had giv'n her honour to a wretch.

This I hold to be totally out of nature; firſt, becauſe it is a palpable departure from his

his reſolution to uſe *gracious words*; next, becauſe it has a certain tendency to produce rage and not repentance; and thirdly, becauſe it is founded in exaggeration and falſehood; for how is he warranted to ſay that the ſtory is the public talk and ſport of the city? If it were ſo, what can his interference avail? why ſeek this interview?

Why come to tell her how ſhe might be happy?
To ſooth the ſecret anguiſh of her ſoul?
To comfort that fair mourner, that forlorn one,
And teach her ſteps to know the paths of peace?

No judge of nature will think he takes the means to lead her into the *paths of peace*, by hurrying her to the very brink of deſperation. I need not enlarge upon this obſervation, and ſhall therefore only remark, that the ſcene breaks up, as might be expected, with the following proof of her penitence, and his ſucceſs in perſuaſion—

Henceforth, thou officious fool,
Meddle no more, nor dare, ev'n on thy life,
To breathe an accent that may touch my virtue:
I am myſelf the guardian of my honour,
And will not bear ſo inſolent a monitor.

Let

Let us now enquire how Romont (the Horatio of Maſſinger) conducts this incident, a character from whom leſs diſcretion is to be expected than from his philoſophical ſucceſſor. Romont himſelf diſcovers Beaumelle and Novall engaged in the moſt wanton familiarities, and, with a warmth ſuitable to his zeal, breaks up the amorous conference by driving Novall off the ſcene with ineffable contempt: he then applies himſelf to the lady, and with a very natural and manly ſpririt ſays,

——I reſpect you
Not for yourſelf, but in remembrance of
Who is your father, and whoſe wife you now are.

She replies to him with contempt and ridicule; he reſumes the ſame characteriſtic ſtrain he ſet out with, and proceeds—

My intents,
Madam, deſerve not this; nor do I ſtay
To be the whetſtone of your wit: Preſerve it
To ſpend on ſuch as know how to admire
Such colour'd ſtuff. In me there is now ſpeaks to you
As true a friend and ſervant to your honour,
And one that will with as much hazard guard it,
As ever man did goodneſs. But then, lady,

You

You muſt endeavour, not alone to be,
But to appear worthy ſuch love and ſervice.

We have juſt now heard Horatio reproach Caliſta with the reports that were circulated againſt her reputation; let us compare it with what Romont ſays upon the ſame ſubject—

But yet be careful!
Detraction's a bold monſter, and fears not
To wound the fame of princes, if it find
But any blemiſh in their lives to work on.
But I'll be plainer with you: Had the people
Been learnt to ſpeak but what even now I ſaw,
Their malice out of that would raiſe an engine
To overthrow your honour. In my ſight,
With yonder painted fool I frighted from you,
You us'd familiarity beyond
A modeſt entertainment: You embrac'd him
With too much ardour for a ſtranger, and
Met him with kiſſes neither chaſte nor comely:
But learn you to forget him, as I will
Your bounties to him; you will find it ſafer
Rather to be uncourtly than immodeſt.

What avails it to attempt drawing a compariſon between this conduct and that of Horatio's, where no compariſon is to be made? I leave it to the reader, and decline

a taſk at once ſo unneceſſary and ungrateful.

When Romont finds no impreſſion is to be made upon Beaumelle, he meets her father, and immediately falls into the ſame reflection that Horatio had ſtruck upon—

Her father!—Hah!
How if I break this to him? Sure it cannot
Meet with an ill conſtruction. His wiſdom,
Made powerful by the authority of a father,
Will warrant and give privilege to his counſels.
It ſhall be ſo.

If this ſtep needs excuſe, the reader will conſider that it is a ſtep of prevention. The experiment however fails, and he is rebuffed with ſome aſperity by Rochfort; this draws on a ſcene between him and Charalois, which, as it is too long to tranſcribe, ſo it is throughout too excellent to extract any part from it. I can only expreſs my ſurprize, that the author of *The Fair Penitent*, with this ſcene before him, could conduct his interview between Altamont and Horatio upon a plan ſo widely different, and ſo much inferior: I muſt ſuppoſe he thought it a ſtrong incident to make Altamont give a blow

blow to his friend, elſe he might have ſeen an interview carried on with infinitely more ſpirit, both of language and character, between Charalois and Romont, in circumſtances exactly ſimilar, where no ſuch violence was committed, or even meditated. Was it becauſe Pierre had given a blow to Jaffier, that Altamont was to repeat the like indignity to Horatio, for a woman, of whoſe averſion he had proofs not to be miſtaken? Charalois is a character at leaſt as high and irritable as Altamont, and Romont is out of all compariſon more rough and plain-ſpoken than Horatio: Charalois might be deceived into an opinion of Beaumelle's affection for him; Altamont could not deceive himſelf into ſuch a notion, and the lady had teſtified her diſlike of him in the ſtrongeſt terms, accompanied with ſymptoms which he himſelf had deſcribed as indicating ſome rooted and concealed affliction: Could any ſolution be more natural than what Horatio gives? Norvall was a rival ſo contemptible, that Charalois could not, with any degree of probability, conſider him as an object of his jealouſy; it would have been a degradation of his cha-

racter, had he yielded to ſuch a ſuſpicion: Lothario, on the contrary, was of all men living the moſt to be apprehended by a huſband, let his confidence or vanity be ever ſo great. Rowe, in his attempt to *ſurprize*, has ſacrificed nature and the truth of character for ſtage-effect; Maſſinger, by preſerving both nature and character, has conducted his friends through an angry altercation with infinitely more ſpirit, more pathos and more dramatic effect, and yet diſmiſſed them with the following animated and affecting ſpeech from Charalois to his friend:

Thou'rt not my friend;
Or being ſo, thou'rt mad. I muſt not buy
Thy friendſhip at this rate. Had I juſt cauſe,
Thou know'ſt I durſt purſue ſuch injury
Thro' fire, air, water, earth, nay, were they all
Shuffled again to chaos; but there's none.
Thy ſkill, Romont, conſiſts in camps, not courts.
Farewel, uncivil man! let's meet no more:
Here our long web of friendſhip I untwiſt.
Shall I go whine, walk pale, and lock my wife
For nothing from her birth's free liberty,
That open'd mine to me? Yes; if I do,
The name of cuckold then dog me with ſcorn:
I am a Frenchman, no Italian born. (*Exit.*)

It is plain that Altamont at leaſt was an exception

ception to this remark upon *Italian* huſbands. I ſhall purſue this compariſon no further, nor offer any other remark upon the incident of the blow given by Altamont, except with regard to Horatio's conduct upon receiving it; he draws his ſword, and immediately ſuſpends reſentment upon the following motive:

Yet hold! By Heav'n, his father's in his face!
Spite of my wrongs, my heart runs o'er with tenderneſs,
And I could rather die myſelf than hurt him.

We muſt ſuppoſe it was the martial attitude that Altamont had put himſelf into, which brought the reſemblance of his father ſo ſtrongly to the obſervation of Horatio, otherwiſe it was a very unnatural moment to recollect it in, when he had juſt received the deepeſt inſult one man can give to another: It is however worth a remark, that this father of Altamont ſhould act on both ſides, and yet miſcarry in his mediation; for it is but a few paſſages before that Altamont ſays to Horatio,

Thou wert my father's friend; he lov'd thee well;
A venerable mark of him

Hangs round thee, and protects thee from my vengeance.
I cannot, dare not lift my ſword againſt thee.

What this *mark* was is left to conjecture; but it is plain it was as ſeaſonable for Horatio's reſcue at this moment, as it was for Altamont a few moments after, who had certainly overlooked it when he ſtruck the very friend againſt whom he could not, dared not *lift his ſword.*

When Lavinia's entrance has parted Altamont and Horatio, her huſband complains to her of the ingratitude with which he has been treated, and ſays—

He, who was all to me, child, brother, friend,
With barbarous bloody malice ſought my life.

Theſe are very extraordinary terms for a man like Horatio to uſe, and ſeem to convey a charge very unfit for him to make, and of a very different nature from the haſty inſult he had received; in fact it appears as if the blow had totally reverſed his character, for the reſolution he takes in conſequence of this perſonal affront, is juſt ſuch an one as would be only taken by the man who dared not to reſent it—

From

From Genoa, from falſehood and inconſtancy,
To ſome more honeſt diſtant clime we'll go;
Nor will I be beholden to my country
For aught but thee, the partner of my flight.

That Horatio's heroiſm did not conſiſt in the ready forgiveneſs of injuries, is evident from the obſtinate ſullenneſs with which he rejects the penitent apologies of Altamont in the further progreſs of the play; I am at a loſs therefore to know what colour the poet meant to give his character, by diſpoſing him to quit his country with this inſult unatoned for, and the additional ſtigma upon him of running away from his appointment with Lothario for the next morning *amongſt the rocks*. Had he meant to bring him off upon the repugnance he felt of reſenting any injury againſt the ſon of a father, whoſe image was ſo viſible *in his face*, that his *heart ran o'er with fondneſs in ſpite of his wrongs, and he could rather die than hurt him*; ſurely that image would have interceded no leſs powerfully for him, when, penetrated with remorſe, he intercedes for pity and forgiveneſs, and even faints at his feet with agony at his unrelenting obduracy: It would be unfair to ſuppoſe he was more like his father

when he had dealt him an inſulting blow, than when he was atoning for an injury by the moſt ample ſatisfaction and ſubmiſſion.

This is the light in which the conduct of Horatio ſtrikes me; if I am wrong, I owe an atonement to the manes of an elegant poet, which, upon conviction of my error, I will ſtudy to pay in the fulleſt manner I am able.

It now remains only to ſay a few words upon the cataſtrophe, in which the author varies from his original, by making Caliſta deſtroy herſelf with a dagger, put into her hand for that purpoſe by her father: If I am to moralize upon this proceeding of Sciolto, I know full well the incident cannot bear up againſt it; a Roman father would ſtand the diſcuſſion better than a Chriſtian one; and I alſo know that the moſt natural expedient is unluckily a moſt undramatic one; yet the poet did not totally overlook it, for he makes Sciolto's firſt thought turn upon a convent, if I rightly underſtand the foling paſſage—

Hence from my ſight! thy father cannot bear thee:
Fly with thy infamy to ſome dark cell,
Where, on the confines of eternal night,

Mourning,

Mourning, misfortunes, cares and anguiſh dwell;
Where ugly Shame hides her opprobrious head,
And Death and Hell deteſted rule maintain;
There howl out the remainder of thy life,
And wiſh thy name may be no more remember'd.

Whilſt I am tranſcribing theſe lines a doubt ſtrikes me that I have miſinterpreted them, and yet Caliſta's anſwer ſeems to point to the meaning I had ſuggeſted; perhaps however they are mere ravings in fine numbers without any determinate idea: Whatever they may be, it is clear they do not go to the length of death: He tells Altamont, as ſoon as ſhe is departed—

I 'wo' not kill her;
Yet by the ruin ſhe has brought upon us,
The common infamy that brands us both,
She ſha' not 'ſcape.

He ſeems in this moment to have formed the reſolution, which he afterwards puts into execution; he prompts her to ſelf-murder, and arms her for the act: This may ſave the ſpectators a ſight too ſhocking to behold, but does it convey leſs horror to the heart, than if he had put her to death with his own hand? A father killing his child for incon-

tinence with the man whom he had not permitted to marry her, when he ſolicited his conſent, is an act too monſtrous to reflect upon: Is that father leſs a monſter, who, deliberately and after full reflection, puts a dagger into her hand and bids her commit ſelf-murder? I ſhould humbly conceive the latter act a degree in guilt beyond the former; eſpecially when I hear that father coolly demanding of his victim, if ſhe has reflected upon what may happen after death—

Haſt thou conſider'd what may happen after it?
How thy account may ſtand, and what to anſwer?

A parent ſurely would turn that queſtion upon his own heart, before he precipitated his unprepared child to ſo awful and uncertain an account: Rage and inſtant revenge may find ſome plea; ſudden paſſion may tranſport even a father to lift his hand againſt his own offspring; but this act of Sciolto has no ſhelter but in heathen authority—

'Tis juſtly thought, and worthy of that ſpirit,
That dwelt in antient Latian breaſts, when Rome
Was miſtreſs of the world.

Did

Did ever poetry beguile a man into ſuch an alluſion? And to what does that piece of information tend, *that Rome was miſtreſs of the world?* If this is human nature, it would almoſt tempt one to reply in Sciolto's own words—

I cou'd curſe nature.

But it is no more like nature, than the following ſentiments of Caliſta are like the ſentiments of a *Penitent*, or a Chriſtian—

That I muſt die it is my only comfort •
Death is the privilege of human nature,
And life without it were not worth our taking—

And again,

Yet Heav'n, who knows our weak imperfect natures,
How blind with paſſions, and how prone to evil,
Makes not too ſtrict enquiry for offences,
But is aton'd by penitence and prayer.
Cheap recompence! here 'twou'd not be receiv'd;
Nothing but blood can make the expiation.

Such is the cataſtrophe of Rowe's *Fair Penitent*, ſuch is the repreſentation he gives us of human nature, and ſuch the moral of his tragedy.

I ſhall conclude with an extract or two from the cataſtrophe of *The Fatal Dowry*; and firſt, for the *penitence* of Beaumelle, I ſhall ſelect only the following ſpeech, addreſſed to her huſband:

I dare not move you
To hear me ſpeak. I know my fault is far
Beyond qualification or excuſe;
That 'tis not fit for me to hope, or you
To think of mercy; only I preſume
To intreat you wou'd be pleas'd to look upon
My ſorrow for it, and believe theſe tears
Are the true children of my grief, and not
A woman's cunning.

I need not point out the contraſt between this and the quotations from Caliſta. It will require a longer extract to bring the conduct of Rochfort into compariſon with that of Sciolto: The reader will obſerve that Novall's dead body is now on the ſcene, Charalois, Beaumelle, and Rochfort her father, are preſent. The charge of adultery is urged by Charalois, and appeal is made to the juſtice of Rochfort in the caſe.

Rochfort. *What anſwer makes the priſoner?*
Beaumelle. *I confeſs*

The

The fact I'm charg'd with, and yield myſelf
Moſt miſerably guilty.

Rochfort. *Heaven take mercy*
Upon your ſoul then! It muſt leave your body—
—Since that the politic law provides that ſervants,
To whoſe care we commit our goods, ſhall die
If they abuſe our truſt; what can you look for,
To whoſe charge this moſt hopeful Lord gave up
All he receiv'd from his brave anceſtors,
All he cou'd leave to his poſterity?
His honour—Wicked woman! in whoſe ſafety
All his life's joys and comforts were lock'd up,
Which thy luſt, a thief, hath now ſtolen from him!
And therefore——

Charalois. *Stay, juſt Judge—May not what's loſt*
By her one fault (for I am charitable,
And charge her not with many) be forgotten
In her fair life hereafter?

Rochfort. *Never, Sir!*
The wrong that's done to the chaſte married bed,
Repentant tears can never expiate:
And be aſſur'd to pardon ſuch a ſin,
Is an offence as great as to commit it.

In conſequence of this the huſband ſtrikes her dead before her father's eyes: The act indeed is horrid; even tragedy ſhrinks from it, and Nature with a father's voice inſtantly cries out—*Is ſhe dead then?—and you have kill'd her?*—Charalois avows it, and pleads his ſentence for the deed; the

revolting, agonized parent breaks forth into one of the moſt pathetic, natural and expreſſive lamentations, that the Engliſh drama can produce—

——*But I pronounc'd it*
As a Judge only, and a friend to juſtice,
And, zealous in defence of your wrong'd honour,
Broke all the ties of nature, and caſt off
The love and ſoft affection of a father:
I in your cauſe put on a ſcarlet robe
Of red dy'd cruelty; but in return
You have advanc'd for me no flag of mercy:
I look'd on you as a wrong'd huſband, but
You clos'd your eyes againſt me as a father.
Oh, Beaumelle! Oh, my daughter!—
Charalois. *This is madneſs.*
Rochfort. *Keep from me!—Cou'd not one good thought riſe up*
To tell you that ſhe was my age's comfort,
Begot by a weak man, and born a woman,
And cou'd not therefore but partake of frailty?
Or wherefore did not thankfulneſs ſtep forth
To urge my many merits, which I may
Object to you, ſince you prove ungrateful?
Flinty-hearted Charalois!—
Charalois. *Nature does prevail above your virtue.*

What concluſions can I draw from theſe comparative examples, which every reader would not anticipate? Is there a man, who has

has any feeling for real nature, dramatic character, moral ſentiment, tragic pathos or nervous diction, who can heſitate, even for a moment, where to beſtow the palm?

No. LXXX.

I WAS ſome nights ago much entertained with an excellent repreſentation of Mr. Congreve's comedy of *The Double Dealer*. When I reflected upon the youth of the author and the merit of the play, I acknowledged the truth of what the late Dr. Samuel Johnſon ſays in his life of this poet, that *amongſt all the efforts of early genius, which literary hiſtory records, I doubt whether any one can be produced that more ſurpaſſes the common limits of nature than the plays of Congreve.*

The author of this comedy in his dedication informs us, that he *deſigned the moral firſt, and to that moral invented the fable*; and does not know *that he has borrowed one hint of it any where.—I made the plot*, ſays he, *as ſtrong as I could*; *becauſe it was ſingle*; *and*

and I made it ſingle becauſe I would avoid confuſion, and was reſolved to preſerve the three unities of the drama. As it is impoſſible not to give full credit to this aſſertion, I muſt conſider the reſemblance which many circumſtances in *The Double Dealer* bear to thoſe in a comedy of Beaumont and Fletcher, intitled *Cupid's Revenge*, as a caſual coincidence; and I think the learned biographer above quoted had good reaſon to pronounce of Congreve, *that he is an original writer, who borrowed neither the models of his plot, nor the manner of his dialogue.*

Mellafont, the nephew and heir of Lord Touchwood, being engaged to Cynthia, daughter of Sir Paul Pliant, the traverſing this match forms the object of the plot, on which this comedy of *The Double Dealer* is conſtructed; the intrigue conſiſts in the various artifices employed by Lady Touchwood and her agents for that purpoſe.

That the object is (as the author himſelf ſtates it to be) *ſingly* this, will appear upon conſidering, that although the ruin of Mellafont's fortune is for a time effected by theſe contrivances, that are employed for traverſing his marriage, yet it is rather a meaſure

meaſure of neceſſity and ſelf-defence in Lady Touchwood, than of original deſign; it ſprings from the artifice of incident, and belongs more properly to the intrigue, than to the object of the plot.

The making or obſtructing marriages is the common hinge, on which moſt comic fables are contrived to turn, but in this match of Mellafont's, which the author has taken for the ground-work of his plot, I muſt obſerve that it would have been better to have given more intereſt to an event, which he has made the main object of the play: He has taken little pains to recommend the parties to his ſpectators, or to paint their mutual attachment with any warmth of colouring. Who will feel any concern whether Mellafont marries Cynthia or not, if they themſelves appear indifferent on the occaſion, and upon the eve of their nuptials converſe in the follow ſtrain?

Mel. *You ſeem thoughtful Cynthia.*

Cyn. *I am thinking, tho' marriage makes man and wife one fleſh, it leaves them ſtill two fools, and they become more conſpicuous by ſetting off one another.*

Mel. *That's only when two fools meet, and their follies are oppoſed.*

Cyn.

Cyn. *Nay I have known two wits meet, and by the oppoſition of their wit, render themſelves as ridiculous as fools. 'Tis an old game we are going to play at; what think you of drawing ſtakes, and giving over in time?*

Mel. *No, hang it, that's not endeavouring to win, becauſe it is poſſible we may loſe—&c. &c.*

This ſcene, which proceeds throughout in the ſame ſtrain, ſeems to confirm Dr. Johnſon's remark, that *Congreve formed a peculiar idea of comic excellence, which he ſuppoſed to conſiſt in gay remarks and unexpected anſwers*—that *his ſcenes exhibit not much of humour, imagery or paſſion; his perſonages are a kind of intellectual gladiators; every ſentence is to ward or ſtrike; the conteſt of ſmartneſs is never intermitted; and his wit is a meteor playing to and fro with alternate coruſcations.*

There is but one more interview between Cynthia and Mellafont, which is the opening of the fourth act, and this is of ſo flat and inſipid a ſort, as to be with reaſon omitted, in repreſentation: I think therefore it may be juſtly obſerved, that this match, for the prevention of which artifices of ſo virulent and diabolical a nature are practiſed by Lady Touchwood and *The Double Dealer*, is not preſſed upon the feelings

ings of the ſpectators in ſo intereſting a manner, as it ſhould and might have been.

Having remarked upon the object of the plot, I ſhall next conſider the intrigue; and for this purpoſe we muſt methodically trace the conduct of Lady Touchwood, who is the poet's chief engine, and that of her under-agent Maſkwell.

The ſcene lies in Lord Touchwood's houſe, but whether in town or country does not appear. Sir Paul Pliant, his lady and daughter, are naturally brought thither, upon the day preceding Cynthia's marriage, to adjuſt the ſettlement: Lord and Lady Froth, Careleſs and Briſk, are viſiters on the occaſion; Mellafont and Maſkwell are inmates: This diſpoſition is as happy as can be deviſed. The incident related by Mellafont to Careleſs, of the attempt upon him made by Lady Touchwood, artfully prepares us to expect every thing that revenge and paſſion can ſuggeſt for fruſtrating his happineſs; and it is judicious to repreſent Mellafont incredulous as to the criminality of Maſkwell's intercourſe with Lady Touchwood; for if he had believed it upon Careleſs's ſuggeſtion, it would have made his

blindneſs

blindneſs to the character of Maſkwell not only weak, (which in fact it is) but unnatural and even guilty.

Maſkwell in the firſt act makes general promiſes to Lady Touchwood that he will defeat Mellafont's match—*You ſhall poſſeſs and ruin him too.*—The lady preſſes him to explain particulars; he opens no other reſource but that of poſſeſſing Lady Pliant with an idea that Mellafont is fond of her—*She muſt be thoroughly perſuaded that Mellafont loves her.*—So ſhallow a contrivance as this cannot eſcape the lady's penetration, and ſhe naturally anſwers—*I don't ſee what you can propoſe from ſo trifling a deſign; for her firſt converſing with Mellafont will convince her of the contrary.* In fact, the author's good ſenſe was well aware how weak this expedient is, and it ſeems applied to no other purpoſe than as an incident to help on the underplot, by bringing forward the comic effect of Lady Pliant's character, and that of Sir Paul: Maſkwell himſelf is ſo fairly gravelled by the obſervation, that he confeſſes he *does not depend upon it*; but he obſerves that *it will prepare ſomething elſe, and gain him leiſure to lay a ſtronger plot; if I*

gain

gain a little time, ſays he, *I ſhall not want contrivance.*

In the ſecond act this deſign upon Lady Pliant is played off, and Maſkwell in an interview with Mellafont avows the plot, and ſays—*to tell you the truth, I encouraged it for your diverſion.* He proceeds to ſay, that in order to gain the confidence of Lady Touchwood, *he had pretended to have been long ſecretly in love with Cynthia*; that thereby he had drawn forth *the ſecrets of her heart*, and that *if he accompliſh'd her deſigns, ſhe had engaged to put Cynthia with all her fortune into his power:* He then diſcloſes by ſoliloquy that his motive for *double dealing* was founded in his paſſion for Cynthia, and obſerves that *the name of rival cuts all ties aſunder and is a general acquittance.* This proceeding is in nature and is good comedy.

The third act opens with a ſcene between Lord and Lady Touchwood, which is admirably conceived and executed with great ſpirit; I queſtion if there is any thing of the author ſuperior to this dialogue. The deſign of alarming the jealouſy and reſentment of Lord Touchwood now appears to have

have originated with the lady, although Maſkwell was privy to it, and *ready for a cue to come in and confirm all, had there been occaſion*; he propoſes to her to ſay that he was *privy to Mellafont's deſign, but that he uſed his utmoſt endeavours to diſſuade him from it*; and on the credit he thinks to eſtabliſh by this proof of his honour and honeſty, he grounds another plot, which he keeps as his ultimate and moſt ſecret reſource, that *of cheating her* [Lady Touchwood] *as well as the reſt*. He now reveals to Mellafont a criminal aſſignation with Lady Touchwood in her chamber at eight, and propoſes to him to come and ſurprize them together, *and then*, ſays he, *it will be hard if you cannot bring her to any conditions*.

This appears to me to be a very dangerous experiment, and ſcarce within the bounds of nature and probability. If Maſkwell, under cover of the propoſal, had in view nothing more than the introduction of Mellafont into Lady Touchwood's bedchamber, there to put them together, and then to bring Lord Touchwood ſecretly upon them in the moment of their interview, his contrivance could not have been

better

better laid for the purpoſe of confirming the impreſſion, which that lord had received againſt his nephew; in which Maſkwell had nothing more to do than to appriſe the lady of his deſign, and ſhe of courſe could have managed the interview to the purpoſes of the plot, and effectually have compleated the ruin of Mellafont: This, it ſhould ſeem, would have anſwered his object compleatly, for he would have riſen upon the ruin of Mellafont, poſſeſſed himſelf of Lord Touchwood's favour, bound Lady Touchwood to concealment of his villainy, and been as able to lay his train for the poſſeſſion of Cynthia, as by any other mode he could chuſe for obtaining her; but if he put it to the iſſue of a ſurprize upon Lady Touchwood, when ſhe was not prepared for the management of that ſurprize, what was he to expect from the introduction of Lord Touchwood, but diſcovery and defeat? Was it not natural to ſuppoſe Mellafont would ſeize the opportunity of reproaching her with her criminality with Maſkwell? It was for that very purpoſe he brings him thither; he tells him *it will be hard if he cannot then bring her to any conditions*;—and if this

this was to paſs under the terror of his reproaches, how could Maſkwell ſet Lord Touchwood upon liſtening to their converſation, and not apprehend for a conſequence apparently ſo unavoidable? He puts every thing to riſque by propoſing to Mellafont to conceal himſelf in Lady Touchwood's bed-chamber, whilſt ſhe is in the cloſet; he then meets Lord Touchwood, appoints him to come to the lobby by the bed-chamber in a quarter of an hour's time; he keeps his aſſignation with the lady, Mellafont ſtarts from his hiding-place, and Maſkwell eſcapes, but ſoon returns, ſecretly introducing Lord Touchwood to liſten to the dialogue between his lady and nephew: She accidentally diſcovers him without his being ſeen by Mellafont, and turns that accidental diſcovery againſt Mellafont. What a combination of improbabilities is here fortuitouſly thrown together to produce this lucky incident! Could Maſkwell reaſonably preſume upon a chance ſo beyond expectation? Every thing is made to turn upon the precarious point of a minute: If Lord Touchwood, who was appointed for a quarter of an hour, had anticipated that appointment,

pointment, if Lady Touchwood had been leſs punctual to her aſſignation, if Mellafont had happened to have dropt one word in his uncle's hearing, charging her with his diſcovery, as had been agreed, or if either ſhe had happened not to have ſeen Lord Touchwood, or Mellafont had ſeen him; in ſhort, if any one thing had turned up, which ought to have come to paſs, or otherwiſe than it was made to come to paſs by the greateſt violence to probability, Maſkwell was inevitably undone: It muſt be owned he laid a train for his own deſtruction, but ſtage incident reſcued him; and this, with the lady's adroitneſs, effaces the improbability, when it paſſes in repreſentation, and keeps nature out of ſight. Had Mellafont told the plain ſtory to his uncle, after Lady Touchwood had ſo unexpectedly turned it againſt him, it would at leaſt have put the plot to riſque, and of this the author ſeems ſo conſcious, that he does not ſuffer him to attempt a ſingle word in his defence; to ſave his villain, he is compelled to ſacrifice his hero.

It is not ſufficient to ſay that a poet has his characters in his power, and can faſhion

incidents according to his own diſcretion; he muſt do no violence to nature and probability for the purpoſes of his plot.

Maſkwell having in this manner eſcaped with ſucceſs, begins next to put in execution his plot for obtaining Cynthia, and this conſtitutes the intrigue and cataſtrophe of the fifth act: His plan is as follows—Having imparted to Lord Touchwood his love for Cynthia by the vehicle of a ſoliloquy, which is to be overheard by his lordſhip, he propoſes to himſelf to carry off Cynthia to St. Albans with the chaplain in the coach, there to be married; this ſhe is to be trepanned into by perſuading her that the chaplain is Mellafont, and Mellafont is brought to co-operate, by a promiſe that he ſhall elope with Cynthia under that diſguiſe, and that the chaplain ſhall be made to follow on the day after and then marry him to Cynthia; with this view Mellafont is appointed to meet Maſkwell in one chamber, and Cynthia in another; the real chaplain is to be paſſed upon the lady for Mellafont, and Mellafont is to be left in the lurch; this plot upon Cynthia Maſkwell confides to Lord Touchwood, telling him there

there is no other way to poſſeſs himſelf of her but by ſurprize.

Though the author undoubtedly meant his villain ſhould in the end outwit himſelf, yet he did not mean him to attempt impoſſibilities, and the abſurdities of this contrivance are ſo many, that I know not which to mention firſt. How was Maſkwell to poſſeſs himſelf of Cynthia by this ſcheme? By what force or fraud is he to accompliſh the object of marrying her? We muſt conclude he was not quite ſo deſperate as to ſacrifice all his hopes from Lord Touchwood by any violence upon her perſon; there is nothing in his character to warrant the conjecture. It is no leſs unaccountable how Mellafont could be caught by this project, and induced to equip himſelf in the chaplain's gown to run off with a lady, who had pledged herſelf to him never to marry any other man: There was no want of conſent on her part; a reconciliation with Lord Touchwood was the only object he had to look to, and how was that to be effected by this elopement with Cynthia?

The jealouſy of Lady Touchwood was another rock on which Maſkwell was ſure to ſplit: It would have been natural for him to have provided againſt this danger by binding my lord to ſecrecy, and the lady's pride of family was a ready plea for that purpoſe; when he was talking to himſelf for the purpoſe of being overheard by Lord Touchwood, he had nothing to do but to throw in this obſervation amongſt the reſt to bar that point againſt diſcovery.

The reader will not ſuppoſe I would ſuggeſt a plan of operation for *The Double Dealer* to ſecure him againſt diſcovery; I am only for adding probability and common precaution to his projects: I allow that it is in character for him to grow wanton with ſucceſs; there is a moral in a villain outwitting himſelf; but the cataſtrophe would in my opinion have been far more brilliant, if his ſchemes had broke up with more force of contrivance; laid as they are, they melt away and diſſolve by their own weakneſs and inconſiſtency; Lord and Lady Touchwood, Careleſs and Cynthia, all join in the diſcovery; every one but Mellafont ſees

ſees through the plot, and he is blindneſs itſelf.

Mr. Congreve, in his dedication above mentioned, defends himſelf againſt the objection to ſoliloquies; but I conceive he is more open to criticiſm for the frequent uſe he makes of liſtening; Lord Touchwood three times has recourſe to this expedient.

Of the characters in this comedy Lady Touchwood, though of an unfavourable caſt, ſeems to have been the chief care of the poet, and is well perſerved throughout; her elevation of tone, nearly approaching to the tragic, affords a ſtrong relief to the lighter ſketches of the epiſodical perſons, Sir Paul and Lady Pliant, Lord and Lady Froth, who are highly entertaining, but much more looſe than the ſtage in its preſent ſtate of reformation would endure: Nothing more can be ſaid of Careleſs and Briſk, than that they are the young men of the theatre, at the time when they were in repreſentation. Of Maſkwell enough has been ſaid in theſe remarks, nor need any thing be added to what has been already obſerved upon Mellafont and Cynthia. As for the moral of the play, which the author ſays he de-

ſigned in the firſt place, and then applied the fable to it, it ſhould ſeem to have been his principal object in the formation of the comedy, and yet it is not made to reach ſeveral characters of very libertine principles, who are left to reform themſelves at leiſure; and the plot, though ſubordinate to the moral, ſeems to have drawn him off from executing his good intentions ſo compleatly, as thoſe profeſſions may be underſtood to engage for.

No. LXXXI.

Citò ſcribendo non fit ut bene ſcribatur; bene ſcribendo fit ut citò. (QUINTIL. LIB. X.)

THE celebrated author of the *Rambler* in his concluding paper ſays, *I have laboured to refine our language to grammatical purity, and to clear it from colloquial barbariſms, licentious idioms and irregular combinations: ſomething perhaps I have added to the elegance of its conſtruction, and ſomething to the harmony of its cadence.* I hope our language hath gained all the profit, which the labours of

of this meritorious writer were exerted to produce: in ſtile of a certain deſcription he undoubtedly excels; but though I think there is much in his eſſays for a reader to admire, I ſhould not recommend them as a model for a diſciple to copy.

Simplicity, eaſe and perſpicuity ſhould be the firſt objects of a young writer: Addiſon and other authors of his claſs will furniſh him with examples, and aſſiſt him in the attainment of theſe excellencies; but after all, the ſtile, in which a man ſhall write, will not be formed by imitation only; it will be the ſtile of his mind; it will aſſimilate itſelf to his mode of thinking, and take its colour from the complexion of his ordinary diſcourſe, and the company he conſorts with. As for that diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic, which the ingenious eſſayiſt terms very properly *the harmony of its cadence*, that I take to be incommunicable, and immediately dependant upon the ear of him who models it. This *harmony of cadence* is ſo ſtrong a mark of diſcrimination between authors of note in the world of letters, that we can depoſe to a ſtile, whoſe modulation we are familiar with, almoſt as

confidently as to the hand-writing of a correſpondent. But though I think there will be found in the periods of every eſtabliſhed writer a certain peculiar tune, (whether harmonious or otherwiſe) which will depend rather upon the natural ear than upon the imitative powers, yet I would not be underſtood to ſay that the ſtudy of good models can fail to be of uſe in the firſt formation of it. When a ſubject preſents itſelf to the mind, and thoughts ariſe, which are to be committed to writing, it is then for a man to chuſe whether he will expreſs himſelf in ſimple or in elaborate diction, whether he will compreſs his matter or dilate it, ornament it with epithets and robe it in metaphor, or whether he will deliver it plainly and naturally in ſuch language as a well-bred perſon and ſcholar would uſe, who affects no parade of ſpeech, nor aims at any flights of fancy. Let him decide as he will, in all theſe caſes he hath models in plenty to chuſe from, which may be ſaid to court his imitation.

For inſtance; if his ambition is to glitter and ſurprize with the figurative and metaphorical brilliancy of his period, let him

tune

tune his ear to ſome ſuch paſſages as the following, where *Doctor Johnſon* in the character of critic and biographer is pronouncing upon the poet *Congreve*. "His ſcenes "exhibit not much of humour, imagery or "paſſion: his perſonages are a kind of in-"tellectual gladiators; every ſentence is to "ward or ſtrike; the conteſt of ſmartneſs "is never intermitted; his wit is a meteor "playing to and fro with alternate coruſca-"tions." If he can learn to embroider with as much ſplendor, taſte and addreſs as this and many other ſamples from the ſame maſter exhibit, he cannot ſtudy in a better ſchool.

On the contrary, if ſimplicity be his object, and a certain ſerenity of ſtile, which ſeems in uniſon with the ſoul, he may open the *Spectator*, and take from the firſt paper of Mr. *Addiſon* the firſt paragraph that meets his eye—the following for inſtance—"There is nothing that makes its way more "directly to the ſoul than *Beauty*, which "immediately diffuſes a ſecret ſatisfaction "and complacency through the imagina-"tion, and gives a finiſhing to any thing "that is great or uncommon: the very firſt

" diſcovery of it ſtrikes the mind with an " inward joy, and ſpreads a chearfulneſs and " delight through all its faculties." Or again in the ſame eſſay. " We no where meet " with a more glorious or pleaſing ſhow in " nature, than what appears in the heavens at " the riſing and ſetting of the ſun, which is " wholly made up of thoſe different ſtains of " light, that ſhow themſelves in clouds of a " different ſituation." A florid writer would hardly have reſiſted the opportunities, which here court the imagination to indulge its flights, whereas few writers of any ſort would have been tempted on a topic merely critical, to have employed ſuch figurative and ſplendid diction, as that of Doctor Johnſon; theſe little ſamples therefore, though ſelected with little or no care, but taken as they came to hand, may ſerve to exemplify my meaning, and in ſome degree characterize the different ſtiles of the reſpective writers.

Now as every ſtudent, who is capable of copying either of theſe ſtiles, or even of comparing them, muſt diſcern on which ſide the greater danger of miſcarrying lies, as well as the greater diſgrace in caſe of ſuch miſcarriage,

miſcarriage, prudence will direct him in his outſet not to hazard the attempt at a florid diction. If his ear hath not been vitiated by vulgar habitudes, he will only have to guard againſt mean expreſſions, while he is ſtudying to be ſimple and perſpicuous; he will put his thoughts into language naturally as they preſent themſelves, giving them for the preſent little more than mere grammatical correction; afterwards, upon a cloſer review, he will poliſh thoſe parts that ſeem rude, harmonize them where they are unequal, compreſs what is too diffuſive, raiſe what is low, and attune the whole to that general cadence, which ſeems moſt grateful to his ear.

But if our ſtudent hath been ſmitten with the turbulent oratory of the ſenate, the acrimonious declamation of the bar, or the pompous eloquence of the pulpit, and ſhall take the lofty ſpeakers in theſe ſeveral orders for his models, rather than ſuch as addreſs the ear in humbler tones, his paſſions will in that caſe hurry him into the florid and figurative ſtile, to a ſublime and ſwelling period; and if in this he excels, it muſt be owned he accompliſhes a great and

arduous taſk, and he will gain a liberal ſhare of applauſe from the world, which in general is apt to be captivated with thoſe high and towering images, that ſtrike and ſurprize the ſenſes. In this ſtile the Hebrew prophets write, "whoſe diſcourſe" (to uſe the words of the learned *Doctor Bentley*) "after "the genius of the Eaſtern nations, is thick "ſet with metaphor and allegory; the ſame "bold compariſons and dithyrambic liberty "of ſtile every where occurring—For when "*the Spirit of God came upon them*, and "breathed a new warmth and vigour "through all the powers of the body and "ſoul: when by the influx of divine light "the whole ſcene of Chriſt's heavenly king-"dom was repreſented to their view, ſo that "their hearts were raviſhed with joy, and "their imaginations turgid and pregnant "with the glorious ideas; then ſurely, if "ever, their ſtile would be ſtrong and lofty, "full of alluſions to all that is great and "magnificent in the kingdoms of this "world." *(Commencement Sermon)*—And theſe flights of imagination, theſe effuſions of rapture and ſublimity, will occaſionally be found in the pulpit eloquence of ſome

of

of our moſt correct and temperate writers; witneſs that brilliant apoſtrophe at the concluſion of the ninth diſcourſe of *Biſhop Sherlock*, than whom few or none have written with more didactic brevity and ſimplicity—"Go," (ſays he to the Deiſts) "go to your "natural religion: Lay before her Maho-"met and his diſciples arrayed in armour "and in blood, riding in triumph over the "ſpoils of thouſands and tens of thouſands, "who fell by his victorious ſword: Shew "her the cities which he ſet in flames, the "countries which he ravaged and deſtroyed, "and the miſerable diſtreſs of all the inha-"bitants of the earth. When ſhe has "viewed him in this ſcene, carry her into "his retirements; ſhew her the prophet's "chamber, his concubines and wives; let "her ſee his adultery, and hear him alledge "revelation and his divine commiſſion to "juſtify his luſt and oppreſſion. When ſhe "is tired with this proſpect, then ſhew her "the bleſſed Jeſus, humble and meek, do-"ing good to all the ſons of men, patiently "inſtructing both the ignorant and per-"verſe; let her ſee him in his moſt retired "privacies; let her follow him to the

"mount,

" mount, and hear his devotions and ſuppli-
" cations to God; carry her to his table to
" view his poor fare, and hear his heavenly
" diſcourſe: Let her ſee him injured but
" not provoked; let her attend him to the
" tribunal, and conſider the patience with
" which he endured the ſcoffs and reproaches
" of his enemies: Lead her to his croſs, and
" let her view him in the agony of death,
" and hear his laſt prayer for his perſecutors
" —*Father, forgive them, for they know not*
" *what they do.*"

This is a lofty paſſage in the high imperative tone of declamation; it is richly coloured, boldly contraſted and replete with imagery, and is amongſt the ſtrongeſt of thoſe inſtances, where the orator addreſſes himſelf to the ſenſes and paſſions of his hearers: But let the diſciple tread this path with caution; let him wait the call, and be ſure he has an occaſion worthy of his efforts before he makes them.

Allegory, perſonification and metaphor will preſs upon his imagination at certain times, but let him ſoberly conſult his judgment in thoſe moments, and weigh their fitneſs before he admits them into his ſtile.

As

As for allegory, it is at beſt but a kind of fairy form; it is hard to naturalize it, and it will rarely fill a graceful part in any manly compoſition. With reſpect to perſonification, as I am ſpeaking of proſe only, it is but an exotic ornament, and may be conſidered rather as the loan of the muſes than as the property of proſe; let our ſtudent therefore beware how he borrows the feathers of the jay, leſt his unnatural finery ſhould only ſerve to make him pointed at and deſpiſed. Metaphor, on the other hand, is common property, and he may take his ſhare of it, provided he has diſcretion not to abuſe his privilege, and neither ſurfeits the appetite with repletion, nor confounds the palate with too much variety: Let his metaphor be appoſite, ſingle and unconfuſed, and it will ſerve him as a kind of rhetorical lever to lift and elevate his ſtile above the pitch of ordinary diſcourſe; let him alſo ſo apply this machine, as to make it touch in as many points as poſſible; otherwiſe it can never ſo poiſe the weight above it, as to keep it firm and ſteady on its proper center.

To give an example of the right uſe and application

application of this figure, I again apply to a learned author already quoted—"Our firſt "parents having fallen from their native "ſtate of innocence, the tincture of evil, "like an hereditary diſeaſe, infected all their "poſterity; and the leaven of ſin having "once corrupted the whole maſs of man-"kind, all the ſpecies ever after would be "ſoured and tainted with it; the vicious "ferment perpetually diffuſing and propa-"gating itſelf through all generations."—*(Bentley, Comm. Sermon).*

There will be found alſo in certain writers a profuſion of words, ramifying indeed from the ſame root, yet riſing into climax by their power and importance, which ſeems to burſt forth from the overflow and impetuoſity of the imagination: reſembling at firſt ſight what *Quintilian* characteriſes as the *Abundantia Juvenilis*, but which, when tempered by the hand of a maſter, will upon cloſer examination be found to bear the ſtamp of judgment under the appearance of precipitancy. I need only turn to the famous *Commencement Sermon* before quoted, and my meaning will be fully illuſtrated—"Let them tell us then what is the chain,

" the cement, the magnetiſm, what they " will call it, the inviſible tie of that union, " whereby matter and an incorporeal mind, " things that have no ſimilitude or alliance " to each other, can ſo ſympathize by a mu- " tual league of motion and ſenſation. No; " they will not pretend to that, for they can " frame no conceptions of it: They are " ſure there is ſuch an union from the ope- " rations and effects, but the cauſe and the " manner of it are too ſubtle and ſecret to " be diſcovered by the eye of reaſon: 'tis " myſtery, 'tis divine magic, 'tis natural " miracle."

No. LXXXII.

Defunctus jam ſum, nihil eſt quod dicat mihi.
(TERENT.)

IN all ages of the world men have been in habits of praiſing the time paſt at the expence of the time preſent. This was done even in the Auguſtan æra, and in that witty and celebrated period the *laudator temporis*

ris acti muſt have been either a very ſplenetic, or a very ſilly character.

Our preſent grumblers may perhaps be better warranted; but, though there may not be the ſame injuſtice in their cavilling complaints, there is more than equal impolicy in them; for if by diſcouraging their contemporaries they mean to mend them, they take a very certain method of counteracting their own deſigns; and if they have any other meaning, it muſt be ſomething worſe than impolitic, and they have more to anſwer for than a mere miſtake.

Who but the meaneſt of mankind would wiſh to damp the ſpirit and degrade the genius of the country he belongs to? Is any man lowered by the dignity of his own nation, by the talents of his contemporaries? Who would not prefer to live in an enlightened and a riſing age, rather than in a dark and declining one? It is natural to take a pride in the excellence of our free conſtitution, in the virtues of our Sovereign; is it not as natural to ſympathize in the proſperity of our arts and ſciences, in the reputation of our countrymen? But

theſe

theſe ſplenetic *Dampers* are for ever ſighing over the decline of wit, the decline of genius, the decline of literature, when if there is any one thing that has declined rather than another, it is the wretched ſtate of criticiſm, ſo far as they have to do with it.

As I was paſſing from the city the other day I turned into a coffee-houſe, and took my ſeat at a table, next to which ſome gentlemen had aſſembled, and were converſing over their coffee. A diſpute was carried on between a little prattling volatile fellow and an old gentleman of a ſullen, moroſe aſpect, who in a dictatorial tone of voice was declaiming againſt the times, and treating them and their puiſny advocate with more contempt than either one or the other ſeemed to deſerve: Still the little fellow, who had abundance of zeal and no want of words, kept battling with might and main for the world as it goes againſt the world as it had gone by, and I could perceive he had an intereſt with the junior part of his hearers, whilſt the ſullen orator was no leſs popular amongſt the elders of the party: The little fellow, who ſeemed to think it no good reaſon why any work ſhould be decried

cried only becauſe the author of it was living, had been deſcanting upon the merit of a recent publication, and had now ſhifted his ground from the ſciences to the fine arts, where he ſeemed to have taken a ſtrong poſt and ſtood reſolutely to it; his opponent, who was not a man to be tickled out of his ſpleen by a few fine daſhes of arts merely elegant, did not reliſh this kind of ſkirmiſhing argument, and tauntingly cried out—
"What tell you me of a parcel of gew-gaw
"artiſts, fit only to pick the pockets of a
"diſſipated trifling age? You talk of your
"painters and pourtrait-mongers, what uſe
"are they of? Where are the philoſophers
"and the poets, whoſe countenances might
"intereſt poſterity to ſit to them? Will
"they paint me a Bacon, a Newton or a
"Locke? I defy them: There are not
"three heads upon living ſhoulders in the
"kingdom, worth the oil that would be
"waſted upon them. Will they or you
"find me a Shakeſpear, a Milton, a Dryden,
"a Pope, an Addiſon? You cannot find a
"limb, a feature, or even the ſhadow of the
"leaſt of them: Theſe were men worthy to
"be recorded; poets, who reached the very
"topmoſt

" topmoſt ſummits of Parnaſſus; our mo-
" derns are but piſmires crawling at its
" loweſt root."—This lofty defiance brought our little advocate to a nonplus; the moment was embarraſſing; the champion of time paſt was echoed by his party with a cry of—" No, No! there are no ſuch men " as theſe now living."—" I believe not," he replied, " I believe not: I could give " you a ſcore of names more, but theſe are " enough: Honeſt Tom Durfey would be " more than a match for any poetaſter now " breathing."

In this ſtile he went on crowing and clapping his wings over a beaten cock, for our poor little champion ſeemed dead upon the pit: He muttered ſomething between his teeth, as if ſtruggling to pronounce ſome name that ſtuck in his throat; but either there was in fact no contemporary, whom he thought it ſafe to oppoſe to theſe Goliahs in the liſts, or none were preſent to his mind at this moment.

Alas! thought I, your cauſe, my beloved contemporaries, is deſperate: *Væ Victis!* You are but duſt in the ſcale, while this *Brennus* directs the beam. All that I have admired

admired and applauded in my zeal for thoſe with whom I have lived and ſtill live; all that has hitherto made my heart expand with pride and reverence for the age and nation I belong to, will be immolated to the manes of theſe departed worthies, whom though I revere, I cannot love and cheriſh with that ſympathy of ſoul, which I feel towards you, my dear but degenerate contemporaries!

There was a young man, ſitting at the elbow of the little creſt-fallen fellow, with a round clerical curl, which tokened him to be a ſon of the church. Having ſilently awaited the full time for a rally, if any ſpirit of reſurrection had been left in the fallen hero, and none ſuch appearing, he addreſſed himſelf to the challenger with an air ſo modeſt, but withal ſo impreſſive, that it was impoſſible not to be prejudiced in his favour, before he opened his cauſe.

"I cannot wonder," ſaid he, "if the "gentleman who has challenged us to pro- "duce a parallel to any one of the great "names he has enumerated, finds us un- "prepared with any living rival to thoſe il- "luſtrious characters: Their fame, though

"the

" the age in which they lived did not always
" appreciate it as it ought, hath yet been
" rising day by day in the esteem of posterity,
" till time hath stampt a kind of sacredness
" upon it, which it would now be a literary
" impiety to blaspheme. There are some
" amongst those, whom their advocate hath
" named, I cannot speak or think of but
" with a reverence only short of idolatry.
" Not this nation only but all Europe hath
" been enlightened by their labours: The
" great principle of nature, the very law
" upon which the whole system of the uni-
" verse moves and gravitates, hath been de-
" veloped and demonstrated by the pene-
" trating, I had almost said the præterna-
" tural, powers of our immortal Newton.
" The present race of philosophers can only
" be considered as his disciples; but they
" are disciples who do honour to their ma-
" ster: If the principle of gravitation be the
" grand *desideratum* of philosophy, the dis-
" covery is with him, the application, in-
" ferences and advantages of that discovery
" are with those who succeed him; and can
" we accuse the present age of being idle or
" unable to avail themselves of the ground

" he

" he gave them? Let me remind you that " our preſent ſolar ſyſtem is furniſhed with " more planets than Newton knew; that " our late obſervations upon the tranſit of " the planet Venus were deciſive for the " proof and confirmation of his ſyſtem; that " we have circumnavigated the globe again " and again; that we can boaſt the re- " ſearches and diſcoveries of a Captain " Cook, who, though he did not invent the " compaſs, employed it as no man ever did, " and left a map behind him, compared to " which Sir Iſaac Newton's was a ſheet of " nakedneſs and error: It is with gravita- " tion therefore as with the loadſtone; their " powers have been diſcovered by our pre- " deceſſors, but we have put them to their " nobleſt uſes.

" The venerable names of Bacon and " Locke were, if I miſtake not, mentioned " in the ſame claſs with Newton, and though " the learned gentleman could no doubt " have made his ſelection more numerous, I " doubt if he could have made it ſtronger, " or more to the purpoſe of his own aſ- " ſertions.

" I have always regarded Bacon as the fa- " ther

" ther of philoſophy in this country, yet it " is no breach of candour to obſerve, that " the darkneſs of the age, which he en- " lightened, affords a favourable contraſt to " ſet off the ſplendor of his talents: But do " we, who applaud him, read him? Yet if " ſuch is our veneration for times long ſince " gone by, why do we not? The fact is, in- " termediate writers have diſſeminated his " original matter through more pleaſing " vehicles, and we concur, whether com- " mendably or not, to put his volumes upon " the ſuperannuated liſt, allowing him how- " ever an unalienable compenſation upon " our praiſe, and reſerving to ourſelves a " right of taking him from the ſhelf, when- " ever we are diſpoſed to ſink the merit of a " more recent author by a compariſon with " him. I will not therefore diſturb his ve- " nerable duſt, but turn without further " delay to the author of the Eſſay upon the " Human Underſtanding.

" This Eſſay, which profeſſes to define " every thing, as it ariſes or paſſes in the " mind, muſt ultimately be compiled from " obſervations of it's author upon himſelf " and within himſelf: Before I compare

" the merit of this work therefore with the
" merit of any other man's work of our own
" immediate times, I muſt compare what it
" advances as general to mankind, with
" what I perceive within my particular ſelf;
" and upon this reference, ſpeaking only for
" an humble individual, I muſt own to my
" ſhame, that my underſtanding and the
" author's do by no means coincide either in
" definitions or ideas. I may have reaſon
" to lament the inaccuracy or the ſluggiſh-
" neſs of my own ſenſes and perceptions, but
" I cannot ſubmit to any man's doctrine
" againſt their conviction: I will only ſay
" that Mr. Locke's metaphyſics are not my
" metaphyſics, and, as it would be an ill
" compliment to any one of our contempo-
" raries to compare him with a writer, who
" to me is unintelligible, ſo will I hope it can
" never be conſidered as a reflection upon ſo
" great a name as Mr. Locke's, not to be
" underſtood by ſo inſignificant a man as
" myſelf."

" Well, ſir," cried the ſullen gentleman with a ſneer, " I think you have con-
" trived to diſpatch our philoſophers; you
" have

" have now only a few obſcure poets to diſ-
" miſs in like manner, and you will have a
" clear field for yourſelf and your friends."

No. LXXXIII.

Ingeniis non ille favet plauditque ſepultis,
Noſtra ſed impugnat, nos noſtraque lividus odit.
(HORAT.)

THE ſarcaſtic ſpeech of the old Snarler, with which we concluded the laſt paper, being undeſerved on the part of the perſon to whom it was applied, was very properly diſregarded; and the clergyman proceeded as follows:

" The poets you have named will never
" be mentioned by me but with a degree of
" enthuſiaſm, which I ſhould rather expect
" to be accuſed of carrying to exceſs, than
" of erring in the oppoſite extreme, had you
" not put me on my guard againſt partiality,
" by charging me with it beforehand. I
" ſhall therefore without further apology or
" preface begin with Shakeſpear, firſt

" the merit of this work therefore with the
" merit of any other man's work of our own
" immediate times, I muſt compare what it
" advances as general to mankind, with
" what I perceive within my particular ſelf;
" and upon this reference, ſpeaking only for
" an humble individual, I muſt own to my
" ſhame, that my underſtanding and the
" author's do by no means coincide either in
" definitions or ideas. I may have reaſon
" to lament the inaccuracy or the ſluggiſh-
" neſs of my own ſenſes and perceptions, but
" I cannot ſubmit to any man's doctrine
" againſt their conviction: I will only ſay
" that Mr. Locke's metaphyſics are not my
" metaphyſics, and, as it would be an ill
" compliment to any one of our contempo-
" raries to compare him with a writer, who
" to me is unintelligible, ſo will I hope it can
" never be conſidered as a reflection upon ſo
" great a name as Mr. Locke's, not to be
" underſtood by ſo inſignificant a man as
" myſelf."

" Well, ſir," cried the ſullen gentleman with a ſneer, " I think you have con-
" trived to diſpatch our philoſophers; you
" have

" have now only a few obſcure poets to diſ-
" miſs in like manner, and you will have a
" clear field for yourſelf and your friends."

No. LXXXIII.

Ingeniis non ille favet plauditque ſepultis,
Noſtra ſed impugnat, nos noſtraque lividus odit.
(HORAT.)

THE ſarcaſtic ſpeech of the old Snarler, with which we concluded the laſt paper, being undeſerved on the part of the perſon to whom it was applied, was very properly diſregarded; and the clergyman proceeded as follows:

" The poets you have named will never
" be mentioned by me but with a degree of
" enthuſiaſm, which I ſhould rather expect
" to be accuſed of carrying to exceſs, than
" of erring in the oppoſite extreme, had you
" not put me on my guard againſt partiality,
" by charging me with it beforehand. I
" ſhall therefore without further apology or
" preface begin with Shakeſpear, firſt

" named by you and firſt in fame as well as
" time: It would be madneſs in me to
" think of bringing any poet now living into
" competition with Shakeſpear; but I hope
" it will not be thought madneſs, or any
" thing reſembling to it, to obſerve to
" you, that it is not in the nature of
" things poſſible for any poet to appear
" in an age ſo poliſhed as this of our's,
" who can be brought into any critical
" compariſon with that extraordinary and
" eccentric genius.

" For let us conſider the two great ſtriking
" features of his drama, ſublimity and cha-
" racter. Now ſublimity involves ſentiment
" and expreſſion; the firſt of theſe is in the
" ſoul of the poet; it is that portion of in-
" ſpiration, which we perſonify when we call
" it *the Muſe*; ſo far I am free to acknow-
" ledge there is no immediate reaſon to be
" given, why her viſits ſhould be confined to
" any age, nation or perſon; ſhe may fire the
" heart of the poet on the ſhores of Ionia
" three thouſand years ago, or on the banks
" of the Cam or Iſis at the preſent mo-
" ment; but ſo far as language is concerned,
" I may venture to ſay that modern diction

" will

" will never ſtrike modern ears with that aw-
" ful kind of magic, which antiquity gives
" to words and phraſes no longer in familiar
" uſe: In this reſpect our great dramatic poet
" hath an advantage over his diſtant deſcen-
" dants, which he owes to time, and which
" of courſe is one more than he is indebted
" for to his own pre-eminent genius. As for
" character, which I ſuggeſted as one of the
" two moſt ſtriking features of Shakeſpear's
" drama, (or in other words the true and
" perfect delineation of nature), in this our
" poet is indeed a maſter unrivalled; yet who
" will not allow the happy coincidence of
" time for this perfection in a writer of the
" drama? The different orders of men,
" which Shakeſpear ſaw and copied, are in
" many inſtances extinct, and ſuch muſt
" have the charms of novelty at leaſt in our
" eyes: And has the modern dramatiſt the
" ſame rich and various field of character?
" The level manners of a poliſhed age fur-
" niſh little choice to an author, who now
" enters on the taſk, in which ſuch numbers
" have gone before him, and ſo exhauſted
" the materials, that it is juſtly to be won-
" dered at, when any thing like variety can

" be ſtruck out. Dramatic characters are
" pourtraits drawn from nature, and if all
" the ſitters have a family likeneſs, the artiſt
" muſt either depart from the truth, or pre-
" ſerve the reſemblance; in like manner
" the poet muſt either invent characters, of
" which there is no counterpart in exiſtence,
" or expoſe himſelf to the danger of an
" inſipid and tireſome repetition: To add to
" his difficulties it ſo happens, that the pre-
" ſent age, whilſt it furniſhes leſs variety to
" his choice, requires more than ever for it's
" own amuſement; the dignity of the ſtage
" muſt of courſe be proſtituted to the un-
" natural reſources of a wild imagination,
" and it's propriety diſturbed; muſic will
" ſupply thoſe reſources for a time, and ac-
" cordingly we find the French and Engliſh
" theatres in the dearth of character feeding
" upon the airy diet of ſound; but this,
" with all the ſupport that ſpectacle can
" give, is but a flimſy ſubſtitute, whilſt the
" public whoſe taſte in the mean time be-
" comes vitiated—

——*media inter carmina poſcunt*
Aut Urſum aut Pugiles——

" the

" the latter of which monſtrous proſtitu-
" tions we have lately ſeen our national ſtage
" moſt ſhamefully expoſed to.

" By comparing the different ages of
" poetry in our own country with thoſe of
" Greece, we ſhall find the effects agree in
" each; for as the refinement of manners
" took place, the language of poetry be-
" came alſo more refined, and with greater
" correctneſs had leſs energy and force; the
" ſtile of the poet, like the characters of the
" people, takes a brighter poliſh, which,
" whilſt it ſmooths away it's former aſperi-
" ties and protuberances, weakens the ſta-
" ple of it's fabric, and what it gives to the
" elegance and delicacy of it's complexion,
" takes away from the ſtrength and ſturdi-
" neſs of it's conſtitution. Whoever will
" compare Æſchylus with Euripides, and
" Ariſtophanes with Menander, will need
" no other illuſtration of this remark.

" Conſider only the inequalities of Shake-
" ſpear's dramas; examine not only one
" with another, but compare even ſcene
" with ſcene in the ſame play: Did ever the
" imagination of man run riot into ſuch
" wild and oppoſite extremes? Could this be

" done, or, being done, would it be ſuffered
" in the preſent age? How many of theſe
" plays, if acted as they were originally writ-
" ten, would now be permitted to paſs?
" Can we have a ſtronger proof of the bar-
" barous taſte of thoſe times, in which Ti-
" tus Andronicus firſt appeared, than the
" favour which that horrid ſpectacle was
" received with? yet of this we are aſſured
" by Ben Jonſon. If this play was Shake-
" ſpear's, it was his firſt production, and ſome
" of his beſt commentators are of opinion
" it was actually written by him, whilſt he
" reſided at Stratford upon Avon. Had this
" production been followed by the three
" parts of Henry the Sixth, by Love's La-
" bour Loſt, the two Gentlemen of Verona,
" the Comedy of Errors, or ſome few others,
" which our ſtage does not attempt to re-
" form, that critic muſt have had a very
" ſingular degree of intuition, who had diſ-
" covered in thoſe dramas a genius capable
" of producing the Macbeth. How would
" a young author be received in the preſent
" time, who was to make his firſt eſſay be-
" fore the public with ſuch a piece as Titus
" Andronicus? Now if we are warranted

" in saying there are several of Shakespear's " dramas, which could not live upon our " present stage at any rate, and few, if any, " that would pass without just censure in " many parts, were they represented in their " original state, we must acknowledge it is " with reason that our living authors, stand- " ing in awe of their audiences, dare not " aim at those bold and irregular flights of " imagination, which carried our bard to " such a height of fame; and therefore it " was that I ventured awhile ago to say, " there can be no poet in a polished and cri- " tical age like this, who can be brought " into any fair comparison with so bold and " eccentric a genius as Shakespear, of whom " we may say with Horace—

Tentavit quoque rem, si digne vertere posset,
Et placuit sibi, natura sublimis et acer:
Nam spirat tragicum satis, et feliciter audet:
Sed turpem putat in scriptis metuitque lituram.

" When I bring to my recollection the seve- " ral periods of our English drama since the " age of Shakespear, I could name many " dates, when it has been in hands far infe- " rior to the present, and were it my pur-

" poſe to enter into particulars, I ſhould not " ſcruple to appeal to ſeveral dramatic pro- " ductions within the compaſs of our own " times, but as the taſk of ſeparating and " ſelecting one from another amongſt our " own contemporaries can never be a plea- " ſant taſk, nor one I would willingly engage " in, I will content myſelf with referring to " our ſtock of modern acting plays; many " of which having paſſed the ordeal of critics, " (who ſpeak the ſame language with what I " have juſt now heard, and are continually " crying down thoſe they live with) may " perhaps take their turn with poſterity, and " be hereafter as partially over-rated upon a " compariſon with the productions of the " age to come, as they are now undervalued " when compared with thoſe of the ages " paſt.

" With regard to Milton, if we could not " name any one epic poet of our nation ſince " his time, it would be ſaying no more of " us than may be ſaid of the world in gene- " ral, from the æra of Homer to that of Vir- " gil. Greece had one ſtandard epic poet; " Rome had no more; England has her " Milton. If Dryden pronounced that *the*

" *force*

" *force of nature could no further go*, he was
" at once a good authority and a ſtrong ex-
" ample of the truth of the aſſertion: If his
" genius ſhrunk from the undertaking, can
" we wonder that ſo few have taken it up?
" Yet we will not forget Leonidas; nor ſpeak
" ſlightly of it's merit; and as death has
" removed the worthy author where he
" cannot hear our praiſes, the world may
" now, as in the caſe of Milton heretofore,
" be ſo much the more forward to beſtow
" them. If the Sampſon Agoniſtes is nearer
" to the ſimplicity of it's Grecian original
" than either our own Elfrida or Caractacus,
" thoſe dramas have a tender intereſt, a pa-
" thetic delicacy, which in that are want-
" ing; and though Comus has every charm
" of language, it has a vein of allegory that
" impoveriſhes the mine.

" The variety of Dryden's genius was ſuch
" as to preclude compariſon; were I diſpoſed
" to attempt it. Of his dramatic produc-
" tions he himſelf declares, *that he never*
" *wrote any thing in that way to pleaſe himſelf*
" *but his All for Love.* For ever under arms,
" he lived in a continual ſtate of poetic war-
" fare with his contemporaries, galling and

" galled by turns; he ſubſiſted alſo by expe-
" dients, and neceſſity, which forced his
" genius into quicker growth than was na-
" tural to it, made a rich harveſt but ſlovenly
" huſbandry; it drove him alſo into a du-
" plicity of character that is painful to re-
" flect upon; it put him ill at eaſe within
" himſelf, and verified the fable of the
" nightingale, ſinging with a thorn at it's
" breaſt.

" Pope's verſification gave the laſt and
" finiſhing poliſh to our Engliſh poetry:
" His lyre more ſweet than Dryden's was
" leſs ſonorous; his touch more correct, but
" not ſo bold; his ſtrain more muſical in it's
" tones, but not ſo ſtriking in it's effect:
" Review him as a critic, and review him
" throughout, you will pronounce him the
" moſt perfect poet in our language; read
" him as an enthuſiaſt and examine him in
" detail, you cannot refuſe him your appro-
" bation, but your rapture you will reſerve
" for Dryden.

" But you will tell me this does not ap-
" ply to the queſtion in diſpute, and that,
" inſtead of ſettling precedency between
" your poets, it is time for me to produce

" my

" my own: For this I ſhall beg your ex-
" cuſe; my zeal for my contemporaries
" ſhall not hurry them into compariſons,
" which their own modeſty would revolt
" from; it hath prompted me to intrude
" upon your patience, whilſt I ſubmitted a
" few mitigating conſiderations in their be-
" half; not as an anſwer to your challenge,
" but as an effort to ſoften your contempt.
" I confeſs to you I have ſometimes flatter-
" ed myſelf I have found the ſtrength of
" Dryden in our late Churchill, and the
" ſweetneſs of Pope in our lamented Gold-
" ſmith; Entaptured as I am with the lyre
" of Timotheus in the Feaſt of Alexander,
" I contemplate with awful delight Gray's
" enthuſiaſtic bard—

On a rock, whoſe haughty brow
Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
Rob'd in the ſable garb of woe,
With haggard eyes the poet ſtood;
(Looſe his beard and hoary hair
Stream'd like a meteor to the troubled air,)
And with a maſter's hand and prophet's fire
Struck the deep ſorrows of his lyre.

" Let the living muſes ſpeak for themſelves;
" I have all the warmth of a friend, but not
" the

" the preſumption of a champion: The
" poets you now ſo loudly praiſe when
" dead, found the world as loud in defama-
" tion when living; you are now paying the
" debts of your predeceſſors, and atoning for
" their injuſtice; poſterity will in like man-
" ner atone for your's.

" You mentioned the name of Addiſon
" in your liſt, not altogether as a poet I
" preſume, but rather as the man of morals,
" the reformer of manners, and the friend of
" religion; with affection I ſubſcribe my
" tribute to his literary fame, to his amiable
" character: In ſweetneſs and ſimplicity of
" ſtile, in purity and perſpicuity of ſenti-
" ment, he is a model to all eſſayiſts. At the
" ſame time I feel the honeſt pride of a con-
" temporary in recalling to your memory the
" name of Samuel Johnſon, who as a moral
" and religious eſſayiſt, as an acute and pe-
" netrating critic, as a nervous and elaborate
" poet, an excellent grammarian, and a ge-
" neral ſcholar, ranks with the firſt names in
" literature.

" Not having named an Hiſtorian in your
" liſt of illuſtrious men, you have precluded
" me from adverting to the hiſtories of
" Hume,

" Hume, Robertſon, Lyttelton, Henry, " Gibbon, and others, who are a hoſt of " writers, which all antiquity cannot " equal."

Here the clergyman concluded: The converſation now grew deſultory and unintereſting, and I returned home.

No. LXXXIV.

Eſt genus hominum, qui eſſe primos ſe omnium rerum volunt,
Nec ſunt. (TERENT. EUN.)

WHAT a delightful thing it is to find one's ſelf in a company, where tempers harmonize and hearts are open; where wit flows without any checks but what decency and good-nature impoſe, and humour indulges itſelf in thoſe harmleſs freaks and caprices, that raiſe a laugh, by which no man's feelings are offended.

This can only happen to us in a land of freedom; it is in vain to hope for it in thoſe arbitrary

arbitrary countries, where men muſt lock the doors againſt ſpies and informers, and muſt entruſt their lives, whilſt they impart their ſentiments, to each other. In ſuch circumſtances, a mind enlightened by education is no longer a bleſſing: What is the advantage of diſcernment, and how is a man profited by his capacity of ſeparating truth from error, if he dare not exerciſe that faculty? It were ſafer to be the blind dupe of ſuperſtition than the intuitive philoſopher, if born within the juriſdiction of an inquiſitorial tribunal. Can a man felicitate himſelf in the glow of genius and the gaiety of wit, when breathing the air of a country, where ſo dire an inſtrument is in force as a *lettre de cachet?* But experience hath ſhewn us, that if arbitrary monarchs cannot keep their people in ignorance, they cannot retain them in ſlavery; if men read, they will meditate; if they travel, they will compare, and their minds muſt be as dark as the dungeons which impriſon their perſons, if they do not riſe with indignation againſt ſuch monſtrous maxims, as impriſonment at pleaſure for undefined offences, ſelf-accuſations extorted by torments and ſecret trials,

where

where the priſoner hath neither voice nor advocate. Let thoſe princes, whoſe government is ſo adminiſtered, *make darkneſs their pavilion*, and draw their very mountains down upon them to ſhut out the light, or expect the period of their deſpotiſm: Illuminated minds will not be kept in ſlavery.

With a nation ſo free, ſo highly enlightened, and ſo eminent in letters as the Engliſh, we may well expect to find the ſocial qualities in their beſt ſtate; and it is but juſtice to the age we live in, to confeſs thoſe expectations may be fully gratified: There are ſome perhaps who will not ſubſcribe to this aſſertion, but probably thoſe very people make the diſappointments they complain of: If a man takes no pains to pleaſe his company, he is little likely to be pleaſed by his company. Liberty, though eſſential to good ſociety, may in ſome of it's effects operate againſt it, for as it makes men independant, independance will occaſionally be found to make them arrogant, and none ſuch can be good companions: yet let me ſay for the contemporaries I am living with, that within the period of my own acquaintance

ance with the world, the reform in it's ſocial manners and habits has been gradual and encreaſing. The feudal haughtineſs of our nobility has totally diſappeared, and, in place of a proud diſtant reſerve, a pleaſing ſuavity and companionable eaſe have almoſt univerſally obtained amongſt the higher orders: The pedantry of office is gone, and even the animoſity of party is ſo far in the wain, that it ſerves rather to whet our wits than our ſwords againſt each other: The agitation of political opinions is no longer a ſubject fatal to the peace of the table, but takes it's turn with other topics, without any breach of good manners or good fellowſhip.

It were too much to ſay that there are no general cauſes ſtill ſubſiſting, which annoy our ſocial comforts, and diſgrace our tempers; they are ſtill too many, and it is amongſt the duties of an *Obſerver* to ſet a mark upon them, though by ſo doing I may run into repetition, for I am not conſcious of having any thing to ſay upon the ſubject, which I have not ſaid before; but if a beggar, who aſks charity, becauſe of his importunity ſhall at length be relieved, an

author

author perhaps, who enforces his advice, ſhall in the end be liſtened to.

I muſt therefore again and again inſiſt upon it, that there are two ſides to every argument, and that it is the natural and unalienable right of man to be heard in ſupport of his opinion, he having firſt lent a patient ear to the ſpeaker, who maintains ſentiments which oppoſe that opinion: I do humbly apprehend that an overbearing voice and noiſy volubility of tongue, are proofs of a very underbred fellow, and it is with regret I ſee ſociety too frequently diſturbed in it's moſt delectable enjoyments by this odious character: I do not ſee that any man hath a right by obligation or otherwiſe, to lay me under a neceſſity of thinking exactly as he thinks: Though I admit that *from the fullneſs of the heart the tongue ſpeaketh*, I do not admit any ſuperior pretenſions it hath to be *Sir Oracle* from the fullneſs of the pocket. In the name of freedom, what claim hath any man to be the tyrant of the table? As well he may avail himſelf of the greater force of his fiſts as of his lungs. Doth ſenſe conſiſt in ſound, or is truth only to be meaſured by the noiſe it makes? Can it be a diſgrace

to

to be convinced, or doth any one loſe by the exchange, who reſigns his own opinion for a better? When I reflect upon the advantages of our public ſchools, where puerile tempers are corrected by colliſion; upon the mathematical ſtudies, and ſcholaſtic exerciſes of our univerſities, I am no leſs grieved than aſtoniſhed to diſcover ſo few proficients in well-mannered controverſy, ſo very few, who ſeem to make truth the object of their inveſtigation, or will ſpare a few patient moments from the eternal repetition of their own deafening jargon to the temperate reply of men, probably better qualified to ſpeak than themſelves.

There is another grievance not unfrequent though inferior to this abovementioned, which proceeds jointly from the mixt nature of ſociety, and the ebullitions of freedom in this happy country, I mean that roar of mirth and uncontrouled flow of ſpirits, which hath more vulgarity in it than eaſe, more noiſe than gaiety: The ſtream of elegant feſtivity will never overflow it's banks; the delicacy of ſex, the dignity of rank, and the decorum of certain profeſſions, ſhould never be ſo overlooked, as to alarm the feelings of any perſon preſent,

ſent, intereſted for their preſervation. When the ſofter ſex entruſt themſelves to our ſociety, we ſhould never forget the tender reſpect due to them even in our gayeſt hours: When the higher orders by deſcending, and the lower by aſcending out of their ſphere, meet upon the level of good fellowſhip, let not our ſuperiors be revolted by a ruſticity however jovial, nor driven back into their faſtneſſes by our overſtepping the partition line, and making ſaucy inroads into their proper quarters. Who queſtions a miniſter about news or politics? who talks ribaldry before a biſhop? once in ſeven years is often enough for the levelling familiarity of electioneering manners.

There is another remark, which I cannot excuſe myſelf from making, if it were only for the ſake of thoſe luckleſs beings, who being born with duller faculties, or ſtampt by the hand of nature with oddities either of humour, or of perſon, ſeem to be ſet up in ſociety as butts for the arrows of raillery and ridicule: If the object, thus made the victim of the company, feels the ſhaft, who but muſt ſuffer with him? If he feels it not, we bluſh for human nature, whoſe dignity is ſacrificed in his perſon; and as for the

the profeſt buffoon, I take him to have as little pretenſions to true honour, as a punſter has to true wit. There is ſcope enough for all the eccentricities of character without turning cruelty into ſport; let ſatire take it's ſhare, but let vice only ſhrink before it; let it ſilence the tongue that wantonly violates truth, or defames reputation; let it batter the inſulting towers of pride, but let the air-built caſtles of vanity; much more the humble roof of the indigent and infirm, never provoke it's ſpleen.

It happened to me not long ago to fall into company with ſome very reſpectable perſons, chiefly of the mercantile order, where a country gentleman, who was a ſtranger to moſt of the party, took upon him to entertain the company, with a tedious ſtring of ſtories of no ſort of importance to any ſoul preſent, and all tending to diſplay his own conſequence, fortune and independance. Such converſation was ill calculated for the company preſent, the majority of whom had I dare ſay been the founders of their own fortunes, and I ſhould doubt if there was any quarter of the globe acceſſible to commerce, which had not been reſorted

reſorted to by ſome one or other then ſitting at the table. This unintereſting egotiſt therefore was the more unpardonable, as he ſhut out every topic of curious and amuſing information, which could no where meet a happier opportunity for diſcuſſion.

He was endured for a conſiderable time with that patience which is natural to men of good manners and experience in the world: This encouragement only rendered him more inſupportable; when at laſt an elderly gentleman ſeized the opportunity of a ſhort pauſe in his diſcourſe, to addreſs the following reproof to this eternal talker.

"We have liſtened to you, ſir, a long "time with attention, and it does not ap"pear that any body preſent is diſpoſed to "queſtion either your independance, or the "comforts that are annexed to it; we re"joice that you poſſeſs them in ſo full a "degree, and we wiſh every landed gentle"man in the kingdom was in the ſame "happy predicament with yourſelf; but we "are traders, ſir, and are beholden to our "induſtry and fair-dealing for what you "inherit from your anceſtors, and yourſelf "never toiled for: Might it not be altogether

"as

" as amuſing to you to be told of our ad-
" ventures in foreign climes and countries;
" of our dangers, difficulties and eſcapes;
" our remarks upon the manners and cuſ-
" toms of other nations, as to encloſe the
" whole converſation within the hedge of
" your own eſtate, and ſhut up intelligence,
" wide as the world itſelf, within the nar-
" row limits of your pariſh pound? Be-
" lieve me, ſir, we are glad to hear you,
" and we reſpect your order in the ſtate,
" but we are willing to hear each other alſo
" in our turns; for let me obſerve to you in
" the ſtile of the Compting-houſe, that con-
" verſation, like trade, abhors a monopoly,
" and that a man can derive no benefit from
" ſociety, unleſs he hears others talk as well
" as himſelf."

No. LXXXV.

I WAS in company the other day with a young gentleman, who had newly ſucceeded to a conſiderable eſtate, and was a good deal ſtruck with the converſation of an elderly perſon preſent, who was very deliberately caſting up the ſeveral demands that the community at large had upon his property.——"Are you aware," ſays he, "how ſmall a portion of your revenue will "properly remain to yourſelf, when you "have ſatisfied all the claims which you "muſt pay to ſociety and your country for "living amongſt us and ſupporting the cha-"racter of what is called a landed gentle-"man? Part of your income will be ſtopt "for the maintenance of them who have "none, under the denomination of poor-"rates; this may be called a fine upon the "partiality of fortune, levied by the law of "ſociety, which will not truſt its poor "members to the precarious charity of the "rich: Another part muſt go to the debts

" and neceſſities of the government, which
" protects you in war and peace, and is alſo
" a fine, which you muſt be content to pay
" for the honour of being an Engliſhman,
" and the advantage of living in a land of
" liberty and ſecurity. The learned pro-
" feſſions will alſo have their ſhare; the
" church for taking care of your ſoul, the
" phyſician for looking after your body, and
" the lawyer muſt have part of your pro-
" perty for ſuperintending the reſt. The
" merchant, tradeſman and artiſan will have
" their profit upon all the multiplied wants,
" comforts and indulgences of civilized
" life: theſe are not to be enumerated, for
" they depend on the humours and habits
" of men; they have grown up with the
" refinements and elegancies of the age,
" and they will further encreaſe, as theſe
" ſhall advance: They are the conductors,
" which, like the blood-veſſels in the hu-
" man frame, circulate your wealth, and
" every other man's wealth, through every
" limb and even fibre of the national body:
" The hand of induſtry creates that wealth,
" and to the hand of induſtry it finally re-
" turns, as blood does to the heart."

If

If we trace the ſituation of man from a mere ſtate of nature to the higheſt ſtate of civilization, we ſhall find theſe artificial wants and dependences encreaſe with every ſtage and degree of his improvements; ſo that if we conſider each nation apart as one great machine, the ſeveral parts and ſprings, which give it motion, naturally become more and more complicated and multifarious, as the uſes to which it is applied are more and more diverſified. Again, if we compare two nations in an equal ſtate of civilization, we may remark, that where the greater freedom obtains, there the greater variety of artificial wants will obtain alſo, and of courſe property will circulate through more channels: This I take to be the caſe upon a compariſon between France and England, ariſing from the different conſtitutions of them and us with reſpect to civil liberty.

The natural wants of men are pretty much the ſame in moſt ſtates, but the humours of men will take different directions in different countries, and are governed in a great degree by the laws and conſtitution

of the realm in which they are found: There are numbers of people in England, who get their living by arts and occupations, which would not be tolerated in a deſpotic government. Men's manners are ſimplified in proportion to the reſtraint and circumſcription under which they are kept. The country ſports of Engliſh gentlemen furniſh maintenance and employment to vaſt numbers of our people, whereas in France and other arbitrary ſtates, men of the firſt rank and fortune reſide in the capital, and keep no eſtabliſhments of this ſort. What a train of grooms, jockies and ſtable-boys follow the heels of our horſes and hounds in tight boots and leather breeches! each of which carries the clothes of ſix men upon his back, caſed in one ſkin of flannel under another, like the coats of an onion. The loco-motive mania of an Engliſhman circulates his perſon, and of courſe his caſh, into every quarter of the kingdom: A Frenchman takes a journey only when he cannot help it, an Engliſhman has no other reaſon but becauſe he likes it; he moves with every ſhift of the weather, and follows

lows the changes of the moſt variable climate in the world; a froſty morning puts him from his hunting, and he is in London before night; a thaw meets him in town, and again he ſcampers into the country: He has a horſe to run at Epſom, another at Saliſbury, and a third at York, and he muſt be on the ſpot to back every one of them; he has a ſtud at Newmarket, a miſtreſs in London, a ſhooting-box in Norfolk, and a pack of fox-hounds in the New Foreſt: For one wheel that real buſineſs puts in motion, pleaſure, whim, *ennui* turn one hundred: Sickneſs, which confines all the reſt of the world, ſends him upon his travels; one doctor plunges him into the ſea at Brighthelmſtone, a ſecond ſteeps him in warm water at Buxton; and a third ſends him to Bath; for the gentlemen of the learned faculty, whether they help us into life, or help us out of it, make us pay toll at each gate; and if at any time their art keeps us alive, the fine we muſt pay to their ingenuity makes the renewal in ſome caſes too hard a bargain for a poor man to profit by. In all other countries upon earth a

man is contented to be well and pay nothing for being ſo, but in England even health is an expenſive article, as we are for ever contriving how to be a little better, and phyſicians are too conſcientious to take a fee and do nothing for it. If there is any thing like ridicule in this, it is againſt the patient and not againſt the phyſician I would wiſh to point it; it is in England that the profeſſion is truly dignified, and if it is here accompanied with greater emoluments, it is proportionably practiſed with ſuperior learning; if life is more valuable in a land of freedom than in a land of ſlavery, why ſhould it not be paid for according to its value? In deſpotic ſtates, where men's lives are in fact the property of the prince, all ſubjects ſhould in juſtice be cured or killed at his proper charge; but where a man's houſe is his caſtle, his health is his own concern.

As to the other learned profeſſion of the law, to its honour be it ſpoken, there is that charming perplexity about it, that we can ruin one another and ourſelves with the greateſt certainty and facility. It is ſo ſuperior

perior to all other ſciences, that it can turn demonſtration into doubt, truth into contradiction, make improbability put matter of fact out of countenance, and hang up a point for twenty years, which common ſenſe would decide in as many minutes. It is the glorious privilege of the freemen of England to make their own laws, and they have made ſo many, that they can neither count them up nor comprehend them. The parliament of England is without compariſon the moſt voluminous author in the world; and there is ſuch a happy ambiguity in its works, that its ſtudents have as much to ſay on the wrong ſide of every queſtion as upon the right: In all caſes of diſcuſſion it is one man's buſineſs to puzzle, and another's to explain, and though victory be ever ſo certain, it is agreed between the parties to make a long battle: There muſt be an extraordinary faculty of expreſſion in the law, when the only parts clearly underſtood are thoſe which it has not committed to writing.

I ſhall ſay very little in this place upon the ſacred profeſſion of divinity: It is to be

lamented that the church of England is not provided with a proper competency for all who are engaged in performing it's functions; but I cannot close with their opinion, who are for ſtripping its dignities, and equalizing thoſe ſplendid benefices, which are at once the glory and the ſupport of its eſtabliſhment. Levellers and reformers will always have the popular cry on their ſide, and I have good reaſon to know with what inveteracy a man is perſecuted for an opinion which oppoſes it; and yet it is hard to give credit to the ſincerity and diſintereſtedneſs of him who courts popularity, and deny it to the man who ſacrifices his repoſe, and ſtands the brunt of abuſe in defence of what he believes to be the truth.

And now having fallen upon the mention of Popularity, I ſhall take leave to addreſs that divinity with a few lines picked up from an obſcure author, which, though below poetry, are not quite proſe, and on that account pretty nearly ſuited to the level of their ſubject.

" O Popularity, thou giddy thing!
" What grace or profit doſt thou bring?

" Thou

" Thou art not honeſty, thou art not fame;
" I cannot call thee by a worthy name:
" To ſay I hate thee were not true;
" Contempt is properly thy due;
" I cannot love thee and deſpiſe thee too.

" Thou art no patriot, but the verieſt cheat
" That ever traffick'd in deceit;
" A ſtate empiric, bellowing loud
" Freedom and phrenzy to the mobbing crowd;
" And what car'ſt thou, if thou canſt raiſe
" Illuminations and huzzas,
" Tho' half the city ſunk in one bright blaze?

" A patriot! no; for thou doſt hold in hate
" The very peace and welfare of the ſtate;
" When anarchy aſſaults the ſovereign's throne,
" Then is the day, the night thine own;
" Then is thy triumph, when the foe
" Levels ſome dark inſidious blow,
" Or ſtrong rebellion lays thy country low.

" Thou canſt affect humility to hide
" Some deep device of monſtrous pride;
" Conſcience and charity pretend
" For compaſſing ſome private end;
" And in a canting conventicle note
" Long ſcripture paſſages canſt quote,
" When perſecution rankles in thy throat.

" Thou haſt no ſenſe of nature at thy heart,
" No ear for ſcience, and no eye for art,

" Yet confidently doſt decide at once
" This man a wit, and that a dunce;
" And, (ſtrange to tell!) howe'er unjuſt,
" We take thy dictates upon truſt,
" For if the world will be deceiv'd, it muſt.

" In truth and juſtice thou haſt no delight,
" Virtue thou doſt not know by ſight;
" But, as the chymiſt by his ſkill
" From droſs and dregs a ſpirit can diſtill,
" So from the priſons, or the ſtews,
" Bullies, blaſphemers, cheats or Jews
" Shall turn to heroes, if they ſerve thy views.

" Thou doſt but make a ladder of the mob,
" Whereby to climb into ſome courtly job;
" There ſafe repoſing, warm and ſnug,
" Thou anſwer'ſt with a patient ſhrug,
" Miſcreants, begone! who cares for you,
" Ye baſe-born, brawling, clamorous crew?
" You've ſerv'd my turn, and, vagabonds, adieu!"

No. LXXXVI.

BEING now arrived at the concluſion of my Third Volume, and having hitherto given my readers very little interruption in my own perſon, I hope I may be permitted to make one ſhort valedictory addreſs to theſe departing adventurers, in whoſe ſucceſs I am naturally ſo much intereſted.

I have employed much time and care in rearing up theſe Eſſays to what I conceived maturity, and qualifying them, as far as I was able, to ſhift for themſelves, in a world where they are to inherit no popularity from their author, nor to look for any favour but what they can earn for themſelves. To any, who ſhall queſtion them who they are, and whence they come, they may truly anſwer—*We are all one man's ſons*—we are indeed *Obſervers*, but no *Spies*. If this ſhall not ſuffice, and they muſt needs give a further account of themſelves, they will have to ſay, that he who ſent them into the world, ſent them as an offering of his good-will to mankind; that he truſts they

have been ſo trained as not to hurt the feelings or offend the principles of any man, who ſhall admit them into his company; and that for their errors (which he cannot doubt are many) he hopes they will be found errors of the underſtanding, not of the heart: They are the firſt-fruits of his leiſure and retirement; and as the mind of a man in that ſituation will naturally bring the paſt ſcenes of active life under its examination and review, it will ſurely be conſidered as a pardonable zeal for being yet ſerviceable to mankind, if he gives his experience and obſervations to the world, when he has no further expectations from it on the ſcore of fame or fortune. Theſe are the real motives for the publication of theſe Papers, and this the Author's true ſtate of mind: To ſerve the cauſe of morality and religion is his firſt ambition; to point out ſome uſeful leſſons for amending the education and manners of young people of either ſex, and to mark the evil habits and unſocial humours of men, with a view to their reformation, are the general objects of his undertaking.

He

He has formed his mind to be contented with the conſciouſneſs of theſe honeſt endeavours, and with a very moderate ſhare of ſucceſs: He has ample reaſon notwithſtanding to be more than ſatisfied, with the reception theſe Papers have already had in their probationary excurſion; and it is not from any diſguſt, taken up in a vain conceit of his own merits, that he has more than once obſerved upon the frauds and follies of popularity, or that he now repeats his opinion, that it is the worſt guide a public man can follow, who wiſhes not to go out of the track of honeſty; for at the ſame time that he has ſeen men force their way in the world by effrontery, and heard others applauded for their talents, whoſe only recommendation has been their ingenuity in wickedneſs, he can recollect very few indeed who have ſucceeded, either in fame or fortune, under the diſavantages of modeſty and merit.

To ſuch readers, as ſhall have taken up theſe Eſſays with a candid diſpoſition to be pleaſed, he will not ſcruple to expreſs a hope that they have not been altogether diſappointed;

pointed; for though he has been unaſſiſted in compoſing them, he has endeavoured to open a variety of reſources, ſenſible that he had many different palates to provide for. The ſubject of politics, however, will never be one of theſe reſources; a ſubject which he has neither the will nor the capacity to meddle with. There is yet another topic, which he has been no leſs ſtudious to avoid, which is perſonality; and though he profeſſes to give occaſional delineations of living manners, and not to make men in his cloſet (as ſome Eſſayiſts have done) he does not mean to point at individuals; for as this is a practice which he has ever rigidly abſtained from when he mixed in the world, he ſhould hold himſelf without the excuſe, even of temptation, if he was now to take it up, when he has withdrawn himſelf from the world.

In the Eſſays (which he has perſumed to call *Literary*, becauſe he cannot ſtrike upon any appoſite title of an humbler ſort) he has ſtudied to render himſelf intelligible to readers of all deſcriptions, and the deep-read ſcholar will not faſtidiouſly pronounce them ſhallow,

ſhallow, only becauſe he can fathom them with eaſe; for that would be to wrong both himſelf and their author, who, if there is any vanity in a pedantic margin of references, certainly reſiſted that vanity, and as certainly had it at his choice to have loaded his page with as great a parade of authorities, as any of his brother writers upon claſſical ſubjects have oſtentatiouſly diſplayed. But if any learned critic, now or hereafter, ſhall find occaſion to charge theſe Eſſays on the ſcore of falſe authority or actual error, their author will moſt thankfully meet the inveſtigation; and the fair reviewer ſhall find that he has either candour to adopt correction, or materials enough in reſerve to maintain every warrantable aſſertion.

The Moraliſt and the Divine, it is hoped, will here find nothing to except againſt; it is not likely ſuch an offence ſhould be committed by one, who has reſted all his hope in that Revelation, on which his faith is founded; whom nothing could ever divert from his aim of turning even the gayeſt ſubjects to moral purpoſes, and who reprobates the jeſt, which provokes a laugh at the expence of a bluſh.

The

The Eſſays of a critical ſort are no leſs addreſſed to the moral objects of compoſition, than to thoſe which they have more profeſſedly in view: They are not undertaken for the invidious purpoſe of developing errors, and ſtripping the laurels of departed poets, but ſimply for the uſes of the living. The ſpecimens already given, and thoſe which are intended to follow in the further proſecution of the work, are propoſed as diſquiſitions of inſtruction rather than of ſubtlety; and if they ſhall be found more particularly to apply to dramatic compoſition, it is becauſe their author looks up to the ſtage, as the great arbiter of more important delights, than thoſe only which concern the taſte and talents of the nation; it is becauſe he ſees with ſerious regret the buffoonery and low abuſe of humour to which it is ſinking, and apprehends for the conſequences ſuch an influx of folly may lead to. It will be readily granted there are but two modes of combating this abaſement of the drama with any probability of ſucceſs: One of theſe modes is, by an expoſition of ſome one or other of the productions in queſtion, which

are ſuppoſed to contribute to its degradation; the other is, by inviting the attention of the public to an examination of better models, in which the ſtandard works of our early dramatiſts abound. If the latter mode therefore ſhould be adopted in theſe Eſſays, and the former altogether omitted, none of their readers will regret the preference that has been given upon ſuch an alternative.

If the ladies of wit and talents do not take offence at ſome of theſe Eſſays, it will be a teſt of the truth of their pretenſions, when they diſcern that the raillery, pointed only at affectation and falſe character, has no concern with them. There is nothing in which this nation has more right to pride itſelf, than the genius of its women; they have only to add a little more attention to their domeſtic virtues, and their fame will fly over the face of the globe. If I had ever known a good match broken off on the part of the man, becauſe a young lady had too much modeſty and diſcretion, or was too ſtrictly educated in the duties of a good wife, I hope I underſtand myſelf too well to obtrude my old-faſhioned maxims upon them. They might be as witty as they pleaſed, if I thought it

was

was for their good; but if a racer, that has too great a ſhare of heels, muſt lie by becauſe it cannot be matched, ſo muſt every young ſpinſter if her wits are too nimble. If I could once diſcover that men chuſe their wives, as they do their friends, for their manly atchievments and convivial talents, for their being jolly fellows over a bottle, or topping a five-barred gate in a fox-chace, I ſhould then be able to account for the many Amazonian figures I encounter in ſlouched hats, great-coats and half-boots, and I would not preſume to ſet my face againſt the faſhion; or if my experience of the fair-ſex could produce a ſingle inſtance in the ſect of Sentimentaliſts, which could make me doubt of the pernicious influence of a *Muſidorus* and a *Lady Thimble*, I would not ſo earneſtly have preſſed the examples of a *Sappho*, a *Calliope* or a *Meliſſa*.

The firſt Numbers of the preſent collection, to the amount of forty, have already been publiſhed; but being worked off at a country preſs, I find myſelf under the painful neceſſity of diſcontinuing the edition. I have availed myſelf of this opportunity, not only by correcting the imperfections of the firſt

firſt publication, but by rendering this as unexceptionable (in the external at leaſt) as I poſſibly could. I ſhould have been wanting to the public and myſelf, if the flattering encouragement I have already received had not prompted me to proceed with the work; and if my alacrity in the further proſecution of it ſhall meet any check, it muſt ariſe only from thoſe cauſes, which no human diligence can controul.

Vos tamen O noſtri ne feſtináte libelli!
Si poſt fata venit gloria, none propero.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

BRITISH MUSEUM